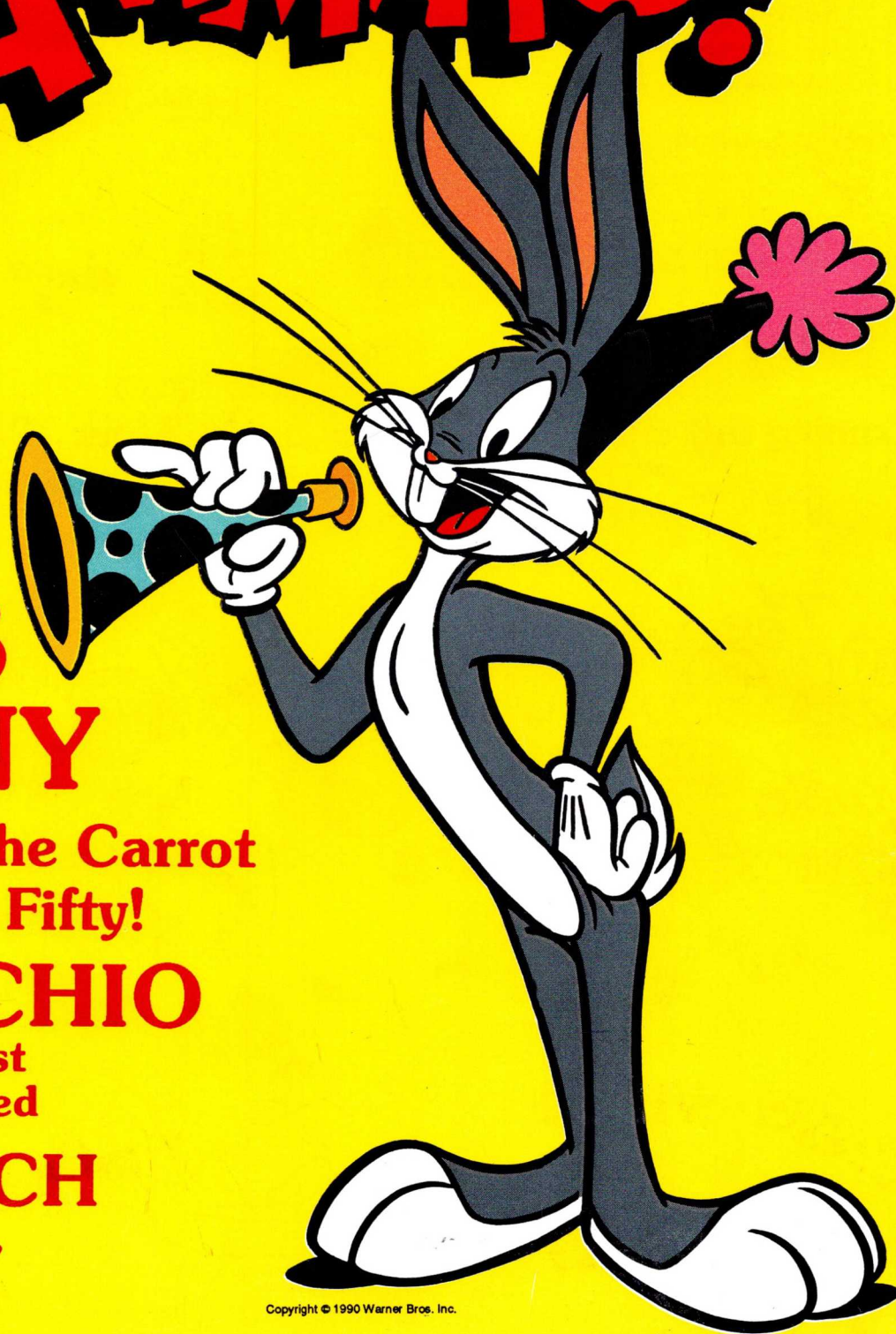


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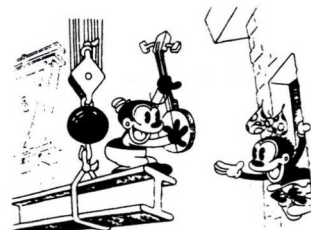
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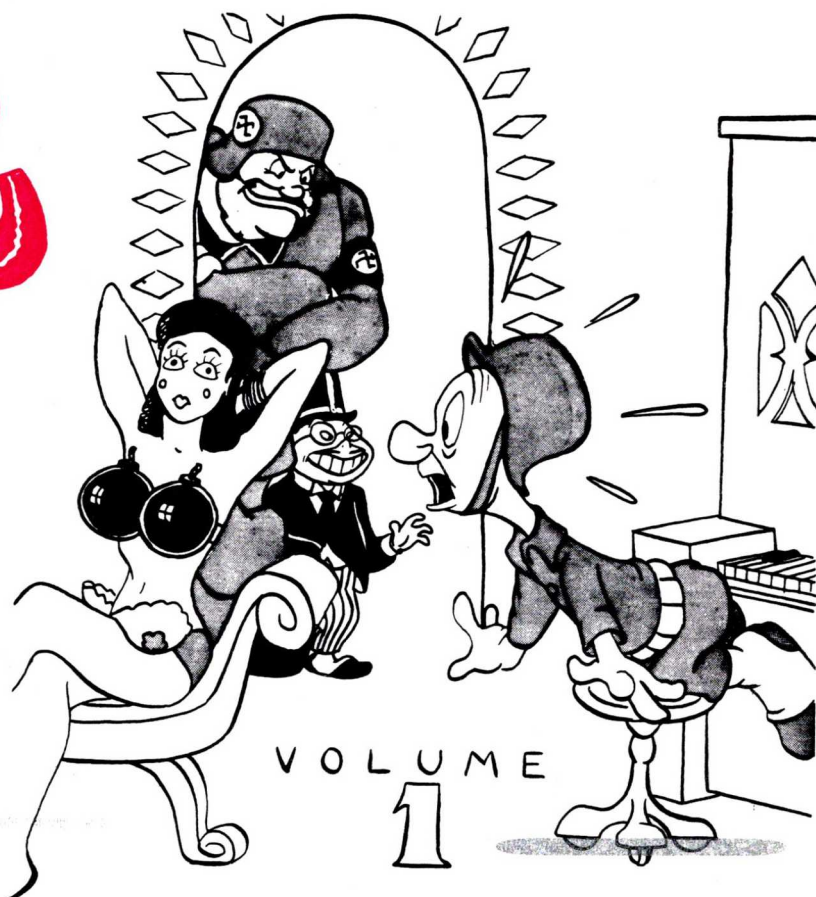
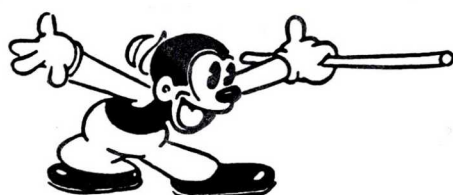
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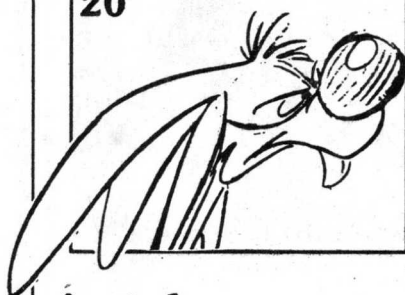
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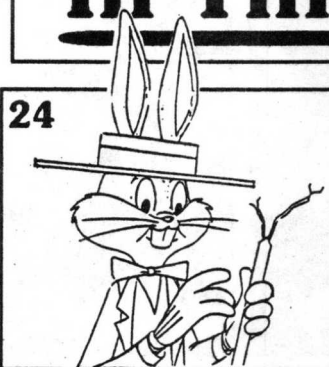
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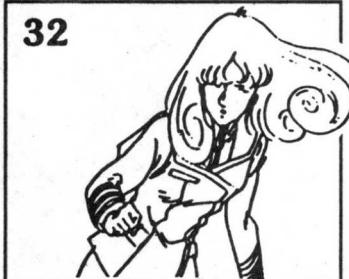
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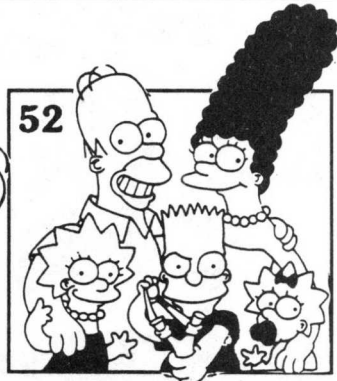
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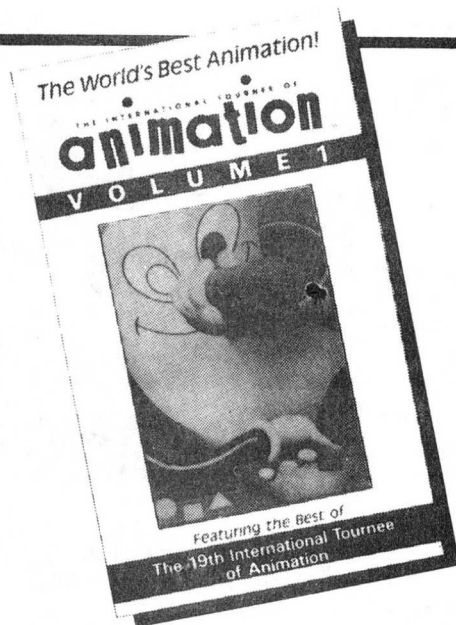
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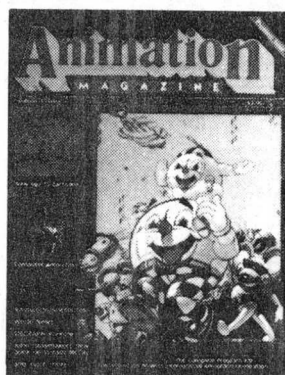
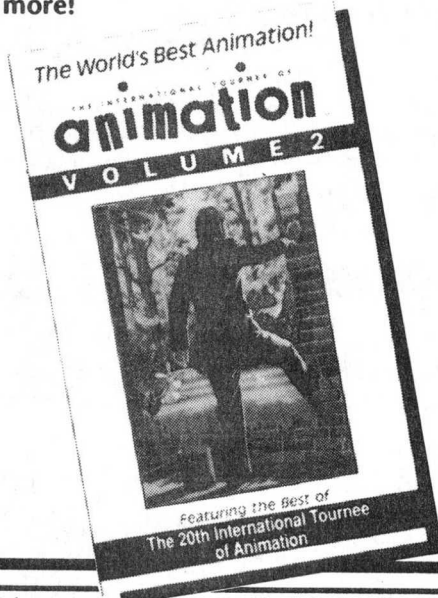
On the Cover: Bugs Bunny toots his own horn in celebration of his fiftieth. Illustration by Shawn Keller (pencils) and Brett Koth (inks); color by Steve Batory. Copyright © 1990 Warner Bros. Inc.



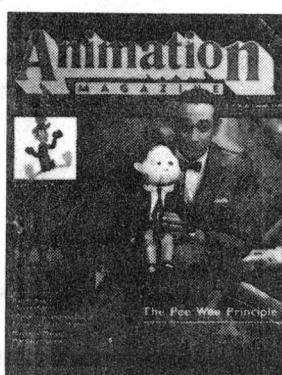
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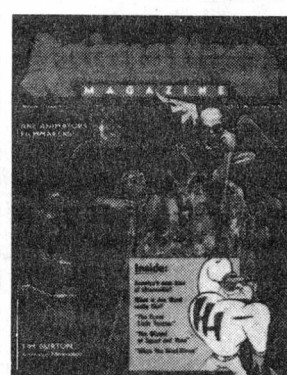
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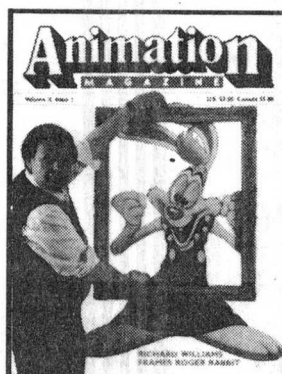
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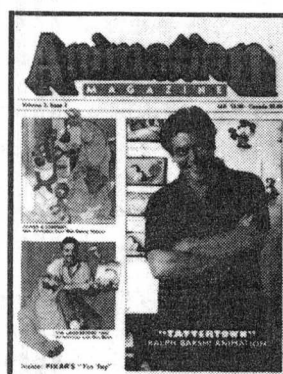
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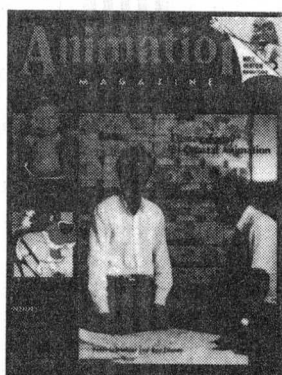
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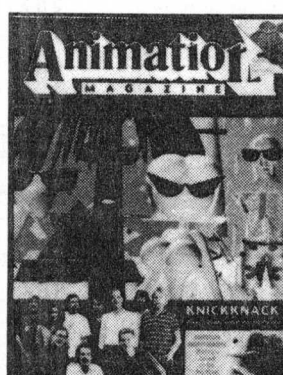
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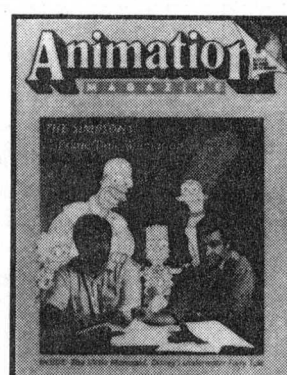
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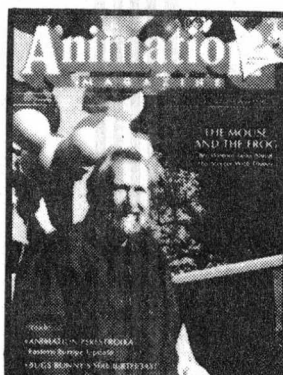
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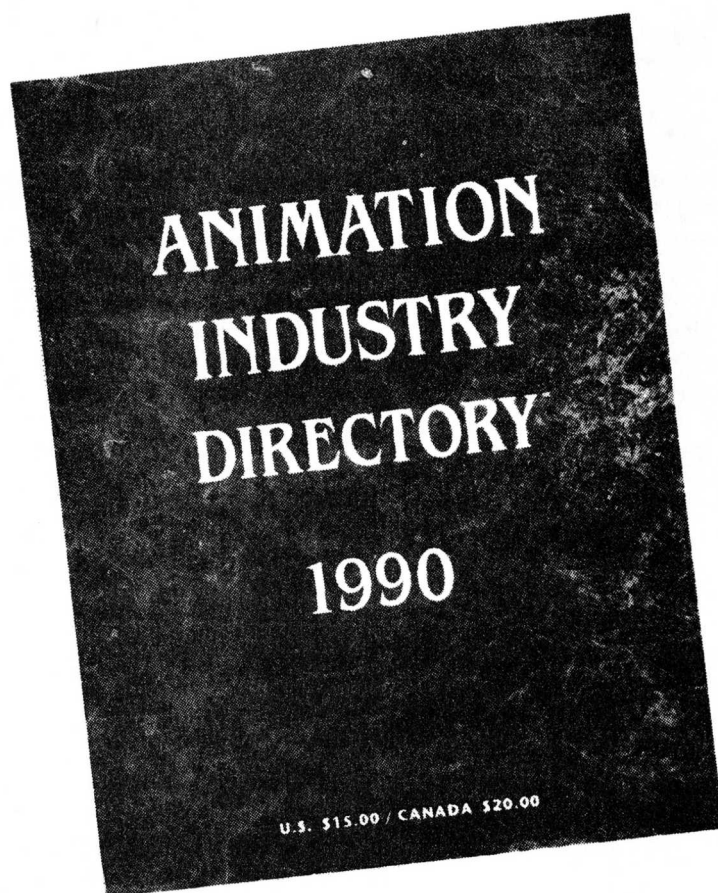
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Do you remember this magazine?
Animato #1, Spring 1983.

Those of you who have been with us for a while have noticed by now that we've undergone another one of our periodic format improvements. While this has been accompanied by another periodic change – our first price increase in a long time – we feel the better interior paper, substantial page increase, and color cover are well worth it. (As long as we were at it, we also took the opportunity to pep up our layout and typography a little; fortunately, doing that doesn't really cost anything.) As always, we're grateful to our readers, without whom our journey from a little Boston-area photocopied fanzine to today's *Animato* would not have been possible. Or at least not nearly so enjoyable and worthwhile.

Three of the features in this issue – Floyd Norman's profile of Pete Alvarado, and Darrell Van Citters and Karl Cohen's Roger Rabbit pieces – were originally scheduled for publication in Jim Korkis and John Cawley's *Cartoon Quarterly* #2, and we thank John and Jim for making these articles available to us for publication. The excellent *Cartoon Quarterly* #1 is still available by mail (see the classified ad elsewhere in this issue for ordering information). Korkis and Cawley's latest project is a book: *The Encyclopedia of Cartoon Superstars, From A to (Almost) Z*, an illustrated guide to the most famous characters in animation which will be published by Pioneer Books in August.

Harry McCracken

Letters to Animato Fan Mail from Some Flounder

Write to *Animato* at PO Box 1240, Cambridge, MA 02238

TOADS, MICE, MERMAIDS, AND OTHERS

Roy Veldboom
Appleton, WI

Well, I'm finally going to add my two cents' worth to the opinion-soaked pages of *Animato*, to shed (I hope) some light on some things in issues #18 and #19.

Alan Dean Foster wonders in #18's letter column why two shots were cut from the Disney Mini-Classics home video release of *The Wind in the Willows*. A pretty good guess can be made by reading the back of the package; the tape in question is listed as having a 34-minute running time. At 34 minutes, *Wind* is probably pushing the limits of the capacity of standard tapes designed for half-hour products. Therefore, the Disney Home Video people probably made what they considered the least obtrusive cuts possible, in order to get it released at the half-hour price point. Of course, that doesn't change the fact that an abridged version of the film is in release...but to get that changed, we customers will have to

somehow convince Disney of the error of their ways.

In #18's "Praxinoscope," Mark Mayerson makes a great deal out of the story content of *The Flying Mouse* as an "aberration" in the thematic content of Disney productions. His question may be answered by a study of release dates. *Flying Mouse* dates from 1934, which would be about the time that story development was beginning on *Snow White*. In that time frame, it is entirely possible that *Mouse*'s story could be an expression of self-doubt and fear of failure on the part of Disney and his staff...but all those fears and doubts were swept away in 1937, when *Snow White* opened and became a smashing success. All the examples of "wishes come true" themes that Mayer-son cites date from after that point. Walt could say these things in his films because his own dreams had come true, through hard work and the contributions of top talent, over and over again. He believe that these statements were nothing less than the absolute truth; he could, in effect, look

anyone in the eye and say, "Hey – it works for me!"

One of the best features of *Animato* is the takes on existing characters by various cartoonists (almost a peek at the stuff that gets pinned on the walls of studios), and I have enjoyed none of these more than Mark Marderosian's conceptually superb cartoon in which he combines *The Little Mermaid* with the Toontown conceit and proceeds logically from there. That basic idea has a lot of mileage in it, and this is just one example.

Which leads into some responses to Our Fearless Leader Harry McCracken's comments on *The Little Mermaid*. It's not that basically disagree with him, but there are some things here that need addressing. I think Harry gives insufficient emphasis to the technical problems that directors John Musker and Ron Clements posed for themselves by using the story device of having the character lose her voice; if a Toon can't talk, then the animation has to be absolutely perfect, with not a single missed expression or pose – and in this picture, it is. Both before and after this development, Ariel's "pencil-point" acting is on target all the way; in the thick of the "Under the Sea" number, she deftly registers her opinion of Sebastian's arguments – without disrupting the song – with a facial take that clearly conveys "Yeah, right."

On to a point of serious disagreement. Harry makes a toss-off remark about "a few early scenes whose frantic pace doesn't seem to serve any particular purpose." I

presume that this is primarily directed to the business near the start of the film with the shark chasing Ariel and Flounder through a sunken wreck. Actually, this serves two purposes: first, it provides some badly-need action to get things started; and second, that turns out to be the same wreck that Ursula churns up from the bottom at the film's climax, and which Eric proceeds to use to deliver the *coup de grace*. (How's that for foreshadowing, folks?)

Speaking of which, I think that Harry's comparison of this picture's climax to that of *Sleeping Beauty* is valid only in terms of a couple of surface similarities: Ursula changes into Something Really Big, and then gets dispatched by a stab through the heart. However, on a conceptual level there are some major differences between the two films. *Beauty*, being asleep the whole time, does nothing at all to rescue herself; her Prince Philip is supposedly the one to shoulder that task...but he gets an awful lot of help from the fairies, who direct traffic, get rid of interferences from Malificent's raven, and even provide the magical weapon necessary to deliver the killing stroke. By contrast, Ariel and Eric have no fairy godmothers to help them. First, Ariel tackles Ursula from behind and deflects her force bolt, saving Eric and eliminating the "henchsharks." Once aboard the derelict, Eric proves his worth by using his human abilities as a sailor (which have been established earlier in the picture) to take control of the craft and use it as a weapon against Ursula. It is not magic but human skill that destroys this monster, and this demonstration is the final proof that enables Triton to overcome his own prejudice against Eric.

I haven't much comment about the interviews, articles, etc., because they are all so informative that I have nothing to add. I'm looking forward to your next issue.

MORE MERMAID MUSINGS

Mark Marderosian
Newton, MA

The one thing in *Animato* #19 that gave me pause was Harry McCracken's slight coolness towards *The Little Mermaid*. I would agree that the film rushed a bit from scene to scene. I would've loved that moment when Ariel hits the surface of the water after getting her legs to have lasted longer. Her silhouette and the musical signature were beautiful, and the moment was way too short.

Still, maybe it was just the mood I was in, but this movie hit me between the eyes emotionally in a way no post-1961 Disney

movie has ever done before. Nor do I believe that *Oliver & Company* deserves mention in the same breath with *Mermaid*. *Oliver* was a Disney short padded to feature length.

Christopher Tennaro
Seffner, FL

Harry McCracken's review of *The Little Mermaid* was right on the money. Though *Mermaid* was gorgeous to watch, I sort of had the feeling I'd seen it all before. I

Cartoon by Jerry Riddle



wonder when the big studios will find their own identity, instead of trying to duplicate the Master himself?

[This is as good a place as any to note a correction on our presentation of Christopher's letter ("Dinosaurs on the Cutting Room Floor") last issue: we misidentified the accompanying illustration as being by "Charles" Tennaro, when it was by Christopher himself.]

BLUTH VS. DISNEY: ROUND THREE
John Beam
East Lansing, MI

I found the letters of two of your readers concerning your critiques of *The Land Before Time* and *Oliver & Company* very interesting. They both feel (and there is an element of truth in what they say) that your coverage in regard to Disney and Bluth films has *Animato* giving the weightier and more positive reviews to the Disney camp. And while *The Little Mermaid* received a decent writeup extolling its virtues in the Winter 1990 issue, *All Dogs Go to Heaven* received no review at all.

Personally, I hated *All Dogs Go to Heaven*, with all of its pretentiousness. It seems to me that Don Bluth either can't find a decent story, or the writers he has are second-rate. His musical numbers were all overdone, and didn't contribute one iota to the story. Little Anne-Marie was the only character who was appealing, and the backgrounds were bland.

While *The Little Mermaid* was truly far superior to Bluth's attempt, *All Dogs* should have still gotten the same amount of coverage. You will find this out when the fans of Don Bluth begin sending you more letters chastising you for your oversight.

[Oh, well. While we do try to have a balance of articles in *Animato*, we don't meter out coverage of competing studios' projects mathematically, and never will. The lack of an *All Dogs* review last issue was due to me being unable to find anybody interested in tackling the project in the short time between the film's release and our deadline. Honest, though: *Animato* has had good things to say about Bluth films, and will again, I'm sure.]

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News flash! *Animato* has entered the garment business with a T-shirt that no self-respecting animation fan is going to want to be without. Almost excessively snappy, the *Animato* shirt is a 50-50 blend red T with Brad Caslor's logo on the front and the identifying title "Animation Fan" on the back, both in stunning white. Appropriate for virtually any occasion (at least we think so); functional; reasonably priced; all in all, a genuine fashion statement. You'll want to order several. \$10 each, plus \$1.50 postage and handling, from The *Animato* Collection, PO Box 1240, Cambridge, MA 02238. Please specify size: adult S, M, L, or XL.

Sole Survivors.

Well, it finally happened. All of the digest-sized issues of *Animato* – issues #1 through #16 – have sold out. The sole survivors in our back-issue stock are the three magazine-sized issues, which are still available at \$3.00 each postpaid. Here are some of the highlights of these jam-packed magazines:

#17: Our first magazine-sized issue features an exclusive Ralph Bakshi interview and preview of *Tattertown*; a look at the world of Chinese animation; an interview with Jack Hannah by Jim Korkis; a long review of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*; columns, news.

#18: Friz Freleng, in a rare interview, talks about his career from Kansas City in the 1920s to the Pink Panther; *Oliver & Company*'s George Scribner takes us behind the scenes of this Disney hit; Tim Fay on Saturday Morning 1988-1989; columns, news, film poll.

#19: John Lasseter on *Luxo Jr.*, *Knickknack*, and computer animation's future; a guided tour of Disney's new Florida studio; an interview with Warner Bros. great Virgil Ross; columns, news.

Subscriptions to future issues are also available, of course – and please note that while the cover price of *Animato* is now \$3.25, the subscription rate (for now) remains \$10.00 for the next four issues hot off the presses, before they reach stores.

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Praxinoscope

The World of Animation

Bill Scott was born in Philadelphia in 1920, and was raised in Trenton, New Jersey until he was 15. In 1935, Bill's machinist father and waitress mother discovered that their son had tuberculosis, and the family moved to Denver, Colorado. Fortunately, the disease caused no further problems after the move.

A 1941 graduate of the University of Denver, Bill taught school for a semester before deciding that teaching was not for him. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1942 with the hopes of entering aerial photography. Through a series of events he found himself assigned to an animation unit, where he began by washing cels, inbetweening, and doing layout work. He was eventually assigned to Frank Thomas's unit, where he learned even more about animation.

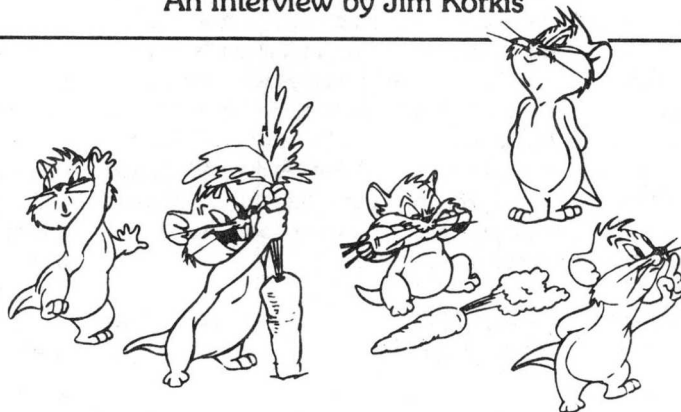
After his discharge, he signed on as a storyman at Warner Bros. in 1946, where he worked for about a year. Then he worked on Bob Clampett's *Time For Beany* puppet show as a writer, puppeteer, and voice artist. That job lasted until Bill asked for a raise. Bill next joined a group known as Industrial Films, later to become United Productions of America (UPA). While there, he co-wrote the Oscar-winning short *Gerald McBoing-Boing* and served as associate producer of the *Gerald McBoing-Boing* show for television.

In 1958, Bill was introduced to Jay Ward, and the two eventually became partners. They were responsible for *Rocky and his Friends*, *The Bullwinkle Show*, *Fractured Flickers*, *George of the Jungle*, and other classic projects, including commercials for *Cap'n Crunch* and other cereals. Besides serving as a writer, Scott supplied many of the voices, including those of *Bullwinkle* and *Dudley Do-Right*. Shortly before his untimely death in 1985, Scott had been doing voices for Disney's *Adventures of the*

Bullwinkle at Warner's

Bill Scott's Early Days at Warner Bros.

An Interview by Jim Korkis



The Goofy Gophers, whom Bill Scott worked with during his days as a storyman for Art Davis's unit at Warner's. Poses from a 1947 model sheet; copyright © Warner Bros. Inc.

Gummi Bears for Saturday-morning TV.

Bill Scott was known for his honesty and good humor, two traits that he constantly demonstrated during his service as president of ASIFA-Hollywood. He genuinely enjoyed animation and the people he worked with over the years. This brief biographical introduction doesn't even touch on the many other areas that he was deeply involved with, like community-theater work as a writer, actor, and director.

The following discussion, dealing with Scott's experiences at Warner Bros., is an excerpt from a much longer interview I did with Scott in 1982.

Jim Korkis

JIM KORKIS: How did you get started at Warner's after your discharge from the air force?

BILL SCOTT: I kicked around for a while. I went to Rudy Ising looking for work. Rudy said he'd try to find something for me, but nothing opened up. Then I got a call from Warner's. Bob Clampett had left a short time before, and they had promoted an ani-

imator named Art Davis to the post of director. They were looking for new storymen for this unit, so they hired a fellow named Lloyd Turner, and me. Phil Monroe had gone to bat for me. He had talked to Chuck Jones, and Jones was one of the guys who said, "Sure, we ought to try some new people."

Were you and Turner a story team?

We worked together as a team for a year. We didn't know it, but we were working in competition with each other. At the end of the year, we found ourselves put off on our own. We each had to write our own story, and who-

ever had the better story would be kept on and the other guy would be fired. This is what I called the "Fang and Claw System."

That must have made things difficult for both of you.

It would have, except that we refused to play the game. We worked on each other's stories. We just worked double-time, that's all. Where we would normally do one story in six weeks, we did two stories in six weeks. All the jokes were joint jokes, exactly the way we'd done it before. We tossed a coin to see whose story would be whose.

When the two stories were done, they liked Lloyd's story better than the one I had supposedly written by myself. He was kept on and I was fired.

What were some of the shorts you and Turner worked together on at Warner's?

Doggone Cats (1947), about the cats preventing the dog from delivering the package to Uncle Louie, was ours. One I really remember was *What Makes Daffy Duck?*

(1948), where Elmer and a fox are both hunting Daffy.

Here's a listing that might help jog your memory a little.

Bone Sweet Bone (1948)! I'd forgotten that completely. *Riff Raff Daffy* (1948); *A Hick, a Slick, and a Chick* (1948); *Two Gophers From Texas* (1948) – that was the one with the two Goofy Gophers. I also remember us doing some work on *Catch as Cats Can* (1947) and *Mexican Joyride* (1947).

Other than the fact that you suddenly found yourself working in competition with Turner, did you enjoy working at Warner's?

Of course. I was working with my heroes. These were all guys I'd heard about for so long. As far as I was concerned, they were the greatest writers in the business: names like Mike Maltese, Tedd Pierce, and Warren Foster. They all turned out to be very nice guys, every one of them. Warren Foster was the squarest of them, and he spent half his time playing the horses. I think he was the hardest worker.

How did they go about creating a story?

Those guys could produce really remarkable stuff. It used to be that you'd start each story with a blank piece of Cellotex on your wall. It was 4' by 8', I remember. You'd start doing little pieces of story and pin them up. When you got enough pinned up to run seven minutes you were finished.

And it took about six weeks to do that?

On one occasion Mike Maltese was working with another story man and got a flash of an idea and wrote this whole bloody story in less than a week. The other story guy was right with him, sketching like mad. They had finished this story in a week, but didn't put it up. All the sketches were shoved in the drawer, and they goofed around and threw push pins and told stories and snuck out to lunch and all that. At the end of each day, they'd pull out a handful of sketches and pin 'em up, and it took exactly six weeks to do this story.

I know Maltese was teamed with Tedd Pierce at this time.

You couldn't get two funnier people going through a storyboard than Maltese and Pierce. Pierce was a very good-looking man. He really had had a patrician look to him when he wasn't bruised – he used to get in a lot of fights off the lot for a variety of reasons. On Mondays he would sometimes show up looking like death warmed over, or he wouldn't show up at all. He had a fine New England accent, and he was a tremendous guy, a very funny fellow.

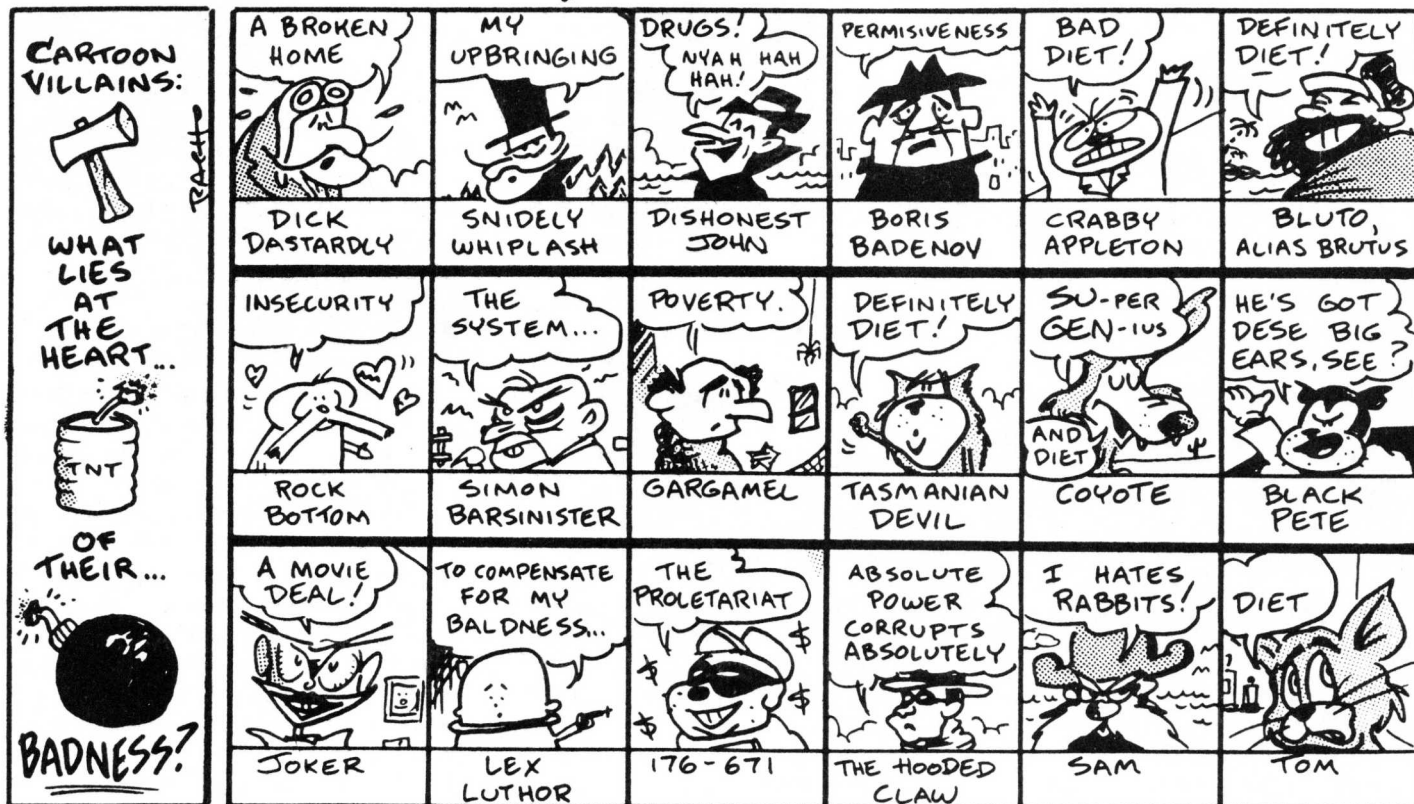
Is there one memory about working at Warner's that sticks out for you?

The time clock that was at the front of the door. It seemed like a long, long hall in a long, long building. I guess there were a hundred people or more working there at the time, and everybody always wanted to be the first to punch out. Otherwise, you had to stand in this damned line forever, waiting to punch out. Well, about 4:45 PM the infiltration would start to get to the clock. If you were in the hall you'd be sent back to your room, or the boss, Eddie Selzer, would call you in and bawl you out or possibly dock your salary.

JAY RATH'S CARTOON PARADE



JAY RATH'S CARTOON PARADE



So there was an element of danger?

Definitely. The infiltration would start from the second floor. We'd go down the steps, then a quick dart across the hall into McKimson's unit's room. Then we'd peek out and if there was no one there, we'd work our way to the ink and paint department. So this whole thing looks like a group of commandos trying to get to the time clock. And then when the big bell on the clock went off, the hall was instantly filled. People were racing down to be the first one to punch out. I used to just laugh my fool head off watching these serious people with all these secret strategies. People were afraid that Selzer might come walking down the hall, so you had to be prepared to hide inside rooms. There were people crouching behind desks, inside closets, and heaven only knows what else. It was a crazy time.

Selzer seems to have been the "heavy" at Warner's.

He was a man who never should have been there, but they couldn't find anything else for him to do on the main lot so they made him head of the cartoons. He

was a mean SOB with no sense of humor. I've been told that after his retirement, he turned out to be a much nicer fellow. But while I was there he was the heavy, the bad guy. There was no doubt about it. He'd scare the pants off me all the time.

Is there a Selzer story that sticks in your head?

My favorite Selzer story happened when I was not there. Lloyd and I were working in the same room and had pinned up a little piece of cardboard on our door that said "Bill Scott and Lloyd Turner: Story." I was fired on a Friday, and on Monday Selzer came walking down the hall and saw the sign was still there. He poked his head in the doorway and said to Lloyd, "Why don't you take that sign off the door?" Lloyd asked why, and Selzer replied, "Scott isn't here any more, and you're not good enough to have your name on the door!" Now, it was unnecessary to handle the situation in that way; he was just throwing his weight around. He was a mean little man.

But other than that, you enjoyed Warner's?

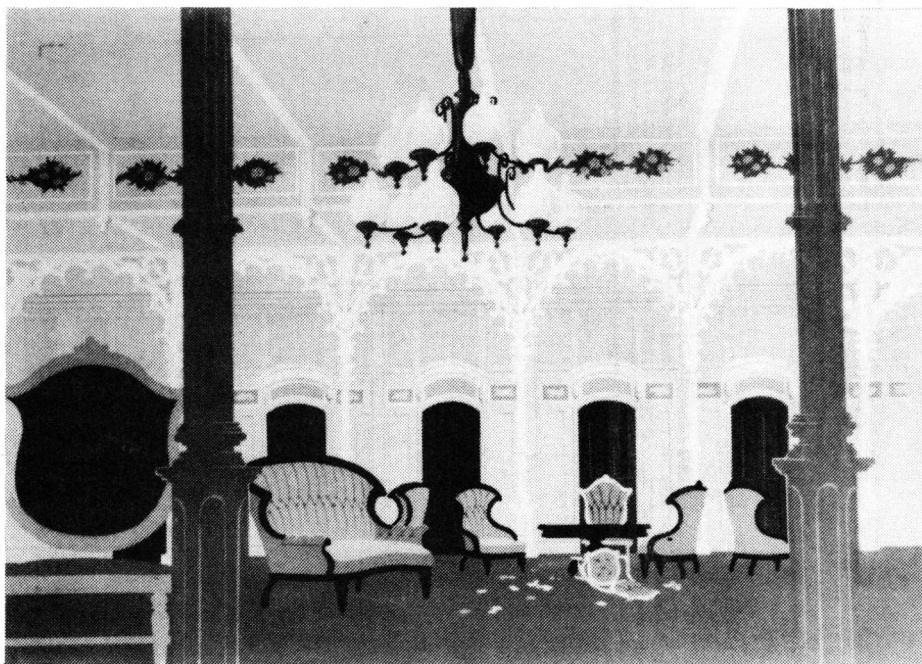
Yes, apart from Selzer, the people were great. I'm glad I had the opportunity to work there. I had fun.

About the Contributors

Notes on some of the contributors to this issue: **Dave Mackey** is a radio traffic manager with a lifelong interest in animation, particularly the cartoons of Warner Bros. • **Mark Mayerson** is a Toronto-based animator who contributed recently to Michael Sporn's adaptation of *Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel* for HBO. **Floyd Norman**, who began his career in animation at Disney in the 1950s, has moved around to most of the major studios, and is now back at Disney as a writer in the publications department. • **Emru Townsend** is an animation student at Concordia University who thinks Bugs Bunny should be president. He is also editor of *Quark*, a magazine of SF and animation (\$2.95 for a sample copy from PO Box 932, St. Laurent, PQ Canada H4L 4Z7). • **Darrell Van Citters'** career in animation began after he graduated from CalArts, and includes work at Disney, as an independent producer/director, and as writer and director of the upcoming Bugs Bunny cartoon *Box Office Bunny*.

Animation Profile: Pete Alvarado

By Floyd Norman



Though some may consider the studio to have been a perfect place for a psychiatrist's case study, it was a unique gathering place for many very talented people. Pete remembers that while there were many different kinds of personalities at the studio, they all respected one another as professionals.

The Porky Pig cartoons were still being made in black-and-white when Pete started working for Bob Clampett's unit. A union man, Pete was even made the shop steward, and tried his best to improve the less-than-ideal working conditions at the studio. He tells of a time when studio boss Leon Schlesinger called one of his many "cost consciousness" meetings. "Boys and girls," said the parsimonious businessman, "we gotta start cutting corners." The boss was

Hanna-Barbera had decided to do a new season of *The Flintstones*. It had been years since the studio had made any new episodes of the show, and many of the talented veterans who had worked on the first shows were no longer around. The series needed to get off to a strong start. The layouts for the show's opening required solid draftsmanship and an understanding of the characters, along with a flair for good animation composition and design. Hanna-Barbera was fortunate enough to have such an artist on staff. The scenes went to Pete Alvarado.

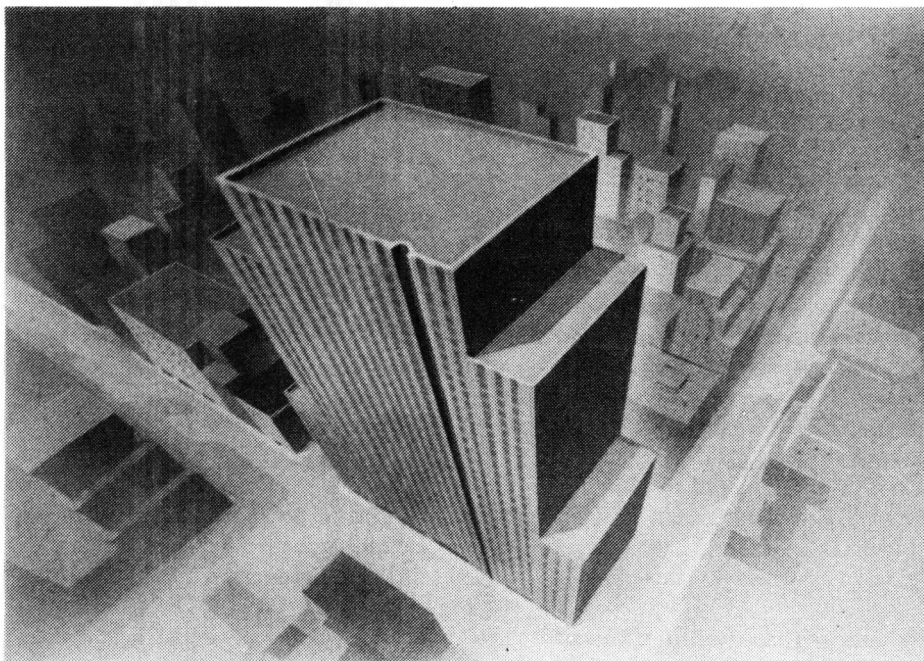
To call Pete a layout artist is not enough. He's worked in almost every area of the animation business, including animation, styling, and character design. He's a talented background painter, as well.

Pete came to California from Colorado. In his younger years he had hoped to become a painter. Because of his talent, he was able to attend the Chouinard Art Institute on a scholarship. It was during that time that he studied with renowned artist Rico LeBrun. Pete tells of a life class in which the students were frantically sketching away at their easels. The colorful and flamboyant LeBrun strode into the room, dramatically raised his arms into the air, and shouted "Cease!" LeBrun was intent on his students thinking things through before launching into a drawing, an important lesson Pete would remember.

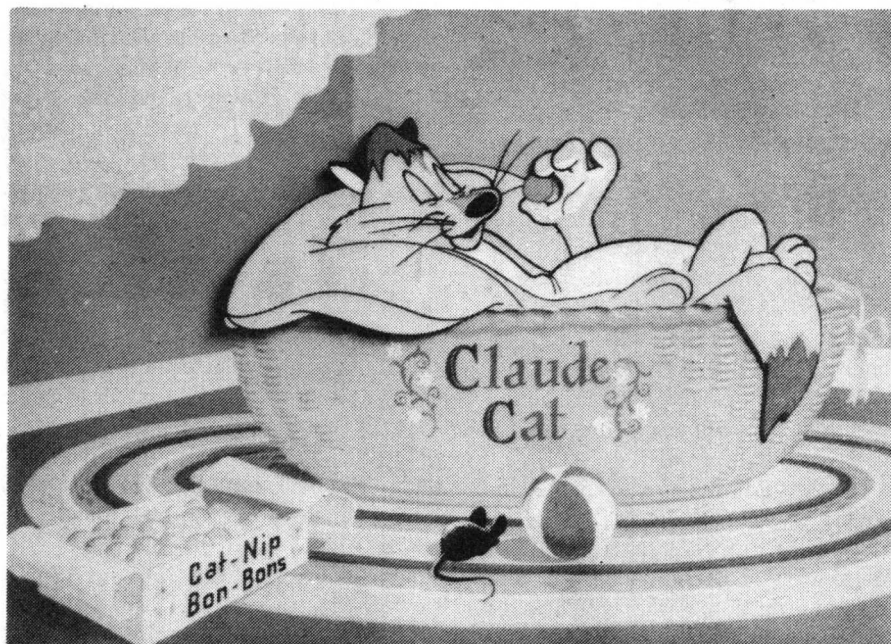
Like so many young artists, Pete tried out for a job at the Disney studio's animation department. He got the job and worked on

the studio's first feature film. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Pete didn't stick around for *Pinocchio*; he moved to the Warner Bros. cartoon department and that legendary Hollywood facility known as Termite Terrace.

The days at Warner Bros. Cartoons are still the ones Pete remembers most fondly.



Clockwise from above left: Alvarado background from *Mississippi Hare* (1949); Pete Alvarado; Claude Cat on an Alvarado background from *Two's a Crowd* (1950); Alvarado art from the comic adaptation of *The Secret of NIMH*; Alvarado backgrounds from *Rabbit Hood* (1949) and *Homeless Hare* (1950). NIMH art copyright © 1982 Mrs. Brisby, Ltd.; all other art copyright © Warner Bros. Inc.



taken at his word. From then on, the artists began clipping corners off of their animation paper. Some even sawed chunks off their of drawing boards.

Eventually, Pete joined the Chuck Jones unit and tried his hand at doing layout. He took over as background painter when Maurice Noble became ill. His design skills and fine background work helped Jones win two Academy Awards. Pete also worked with Chuck on the very first Road Runner cartoon; his desert scenes for *Fast and Furry-ous* featured a brilliant use of color and a strong sense of depth and distance.

It was during this time that Pete began a long relationship with Western Publishing. It was the heyday of the western craze, and Pete found himself pencilling and inking the adventures of Red Ryder, Gene Autry, and Roy Rogers. The country just couldn't get enough of these cowboys, so Pete did comic strips as well as comic books. Eventually, he just did the pencils, and managed to keep two inkers busy.

Pete is just as at ease doing funny-animal characters, and the work he has done has touched on nearly every cartoon character one can think of – not just Disney charac-

ters, but Warner's and MGM ones as well. One of the few artists put under contract, Pete has been doing work for Western for over forty years. That's a lot of books!

Pete has always said he never liked to stay at any one place too long. In the forties, he moved to New York, hoping to illustrate pulp novels, but ended up doing comics because it paid more. Pete did work for Funnies, Inc. and for Fawcett; two of the characters he worked on were the Blue Bolt, a superhero, and Dick Cole, an all-American military cadet. Pete tells of a strange story in which Dick tried to talk Adolf Hitler out of invading Europe.

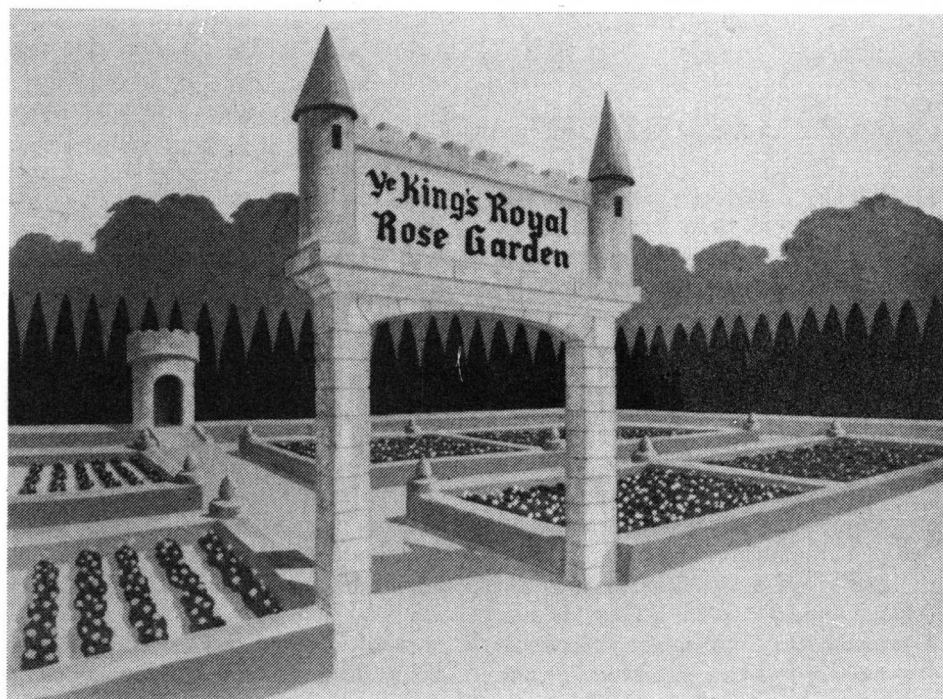
As nice as it was working in the East, Pete found that the weather left a lot to be desired, so he decided to return to the milder climate of Southern California. Over the years he has divided his time between doing storybooks and coloring books for Western, and working on Saturday-morn-



ing shows for studios including Hanna-Barbera, Warner's, UPA, and Ruby-Spears.

At a time when most people think of retirement, Pete continues doing what he does best. He's been working on Hanna-Barbera's new *Jetsons* feature film, and well as pencilling the Donald Duck comic strip for Disney. He recalls that the best part of being in the business has been the friends he's worked with and learned from. "Our work may not hang in the Louvre," says Pete, "but more and more, the public seems to be recognizing animation as a true art form." Funny, we always knew that!

Recalling his days at Chouinard, Pete speaks of his instructor, Rico LeBrun, who told his students that animation is an okay job, as long as one moves on to do something more significant. All of us who love the wonderful world of animation and comics can be thankful that Pete never took LeBrun's advice. As far as the future of the business is concerned, Pete feels that there will always be a need for artists, "at least until they can get the computers to round off the corners."



All Warner Bros. art accompanying this article courtesy Pam Martin

"I Have Seen Things"

An Independent Animator Speaks

By Bob White

This essay is based on a speech delivered at the Boston University Dean's Freshman Colloquium "Animation: a Look Behind the Laughs."

I have seen things.

I've seen things you wouldn't believe. A Sorcerer conjuring shapes in the air above him. A cloud of colors and smoke. A winged creature. Perhaps a butterfly. A monster. Mickey Mouse is watching. It is *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.

I love a film called *Nausicaa*. It's an animated feature film from Japan. I watch in Japanese, even though I do not understand the language. But I understand at least the spirit of the film. A young girl lives in a wonderful world surrounded by family and friends. The peace of her world is threatened by evil, and she struggles to restore it.

Many Japanese animated films are not made for little children. The box-office hit *Akira* is a cyberpunk, science-fiction, apocalyptic epic that might get an R rating here. I think it's thrilling to see stunning visuals and a story of real substance in animation.

I am most happy when I see the works of people I know. The works of my friends. When I was first studying animation, Flip Johnson was making a film called *The Roar From Within*. Each week I got a chance to see a film growing before my eyes. Years

later, I had the same joy seeing Flip create the dial MTV countdown, in a whole new style for him.

But it is not just style and form and look. It is subject matter. Independent animators are making the films they want to make. Telling the stories they want to tell. This is less so in their commercially-commissioned work, but still it is one person's expression, the work of an individual.

Last year I had dinner with Michael Manning of the Olive Jar studio in Boston, the night before he proposed his *Rock Blocks* opening to MTV. I saw his storyboards and heard a rough version of what would be his pitch to the company vice presidents. Later I visited the studio and saw the elaborate sets, and I watched Michael direct the lighting and cinematography.

And then I got to see it all come together as it played on MTV. An alleyway. A running figure putting on goggles and scanning the video inhabitants. All in twenty seconds.

I feed on visual imagery. I devour it. Movies, TV, photos, comic books. I've seen things.

I am also an independent animator. And I make things. Twice I have taken time off from teaching to work on my art full time. It is a pleasure to worry about the weight of my pencil or pen, the texture of the paper I have chosen to work on, instead of worry-

ing about preparation for teaching.

Asking what story to try to tell, what beautiful picture or frightening moment you want to bring to life. How it should look. What it should be about. To have the brewing of ideas be the main resident of your mind throughout the day. And to wrestle with that angel that might be inspiration, or just might not.

I tend to end up working in pieces. I may start a project with an idea or script, but inevitably I end up organizing a series of sometimes very unrelated shots and scenes into the order or form that seems to make the most sense to me at the time.

Often the film speaks to me while it is being made. The next scene is revealed to me by the sequence of scenes that have gone before.

I made a film called *Rip Out Your Eyes*. It is a dark film. It has a dark subject. Monsters and witches are devouring children. It has suggested the horrors of the holocaust to some viewers.

A woman came up to me after one of its screenings and she said something like, "Now I know why there are horror movies." For her, there was something in the film that spoke to her. For me, her comment said that someone heard what I was trying to say.

I have seen things. The writhing tentacles of an octopus become the sensuous limbs of a nude sea woman. That image was on the screen for perhaps three seconds. But I remember it. I carry that with me.

I remember that in *Citizen Kane* someone describes seeing a woman in a white dress in a ferryboat in the distance. He says something like, "Not a day goes by that I don't think of that image." I want to make images like that.

How am I driven? I want a lot.

How can I touch your souls?

If there is evil and hate and violence and pain in the world (and there is; I can see it), part of my reaction to it is to make my pictures.

If there is evil and hate and violence and pain in the world, perhaps what I can show you can begin a chain of events, or continue a chain of events that serves as inspiration to you.

And perhaps one person, out of the many here, can contribute to really doing something. Perhaps you can remove some of the evil and hate and ugliness, and replace it with beauty.

I want to try to make images that are strong. That powerful, that magical.

I want to keep trying to make a beautiful film.

Animato Gets Novel Treatment

...es arrayed on the coffee tables were alien to the Reporter, American Cinema, Animato. As from people came and went, sometimes dropping at the receptionist's window, other times occasionally vanishing into unknown regions back door. None of them wore a suit or tie. The receptionist glanced out at him and said, now, Mr. Collins. Straight down the main d, turn right, last door overlooking the doorway. "What number is her office?"

1. "There's no number. Her name's on

door, he thought. Why not? Wasn't she lid more editing than anyone imagined, xde past tiny rooms overflowing with igs, posters, sketches, and magazine unched over angled boards beneath nge machines hummed and whirred ctedly. closed. Among them was a blazoned

Is it egotistical for us to point out that *Animato* has been mentioned in a novel? Probably. But we couldn't resist mentioning that Alan Dean Foster's fantasy novel *Quozl* (Ace, 1989; \$4.50) does just that. (We're on a table in an animation studio, along with a bunch of other industry magazines.)

The book's author is a long-time animation fan and *Animato* reader, and cartoon fans will relish the satire of TV animation and merchandising that plays a significant role in the book's plot. Alan, if *Quozl* is ever made into a movie - and it would make a fine one (live-action or animated, come to think of it) - *Animato* would be pleased to play itself.

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Get Animated!

Industry Watch

News and Commentary by John Cawley

Wanted: Young Male Couch Potatoes

The upcoming 1990-91 SatAM TV schedule has been announced, although there could still be some changes before the Fall debut. The most interesting aspect of the new schedules is how the ratings leader, ABC, showed the way to the other networks. As reported in the last issue, ABC repeatedly beat out both CBS and NBC in the ratings for the last season of SatAM. The network's teamup of *The Real Ghostbusters* and *Beetlejuice* created an unstoppable ratings rush. The lesson learned by NBC and CBS? Boys were watching more SatAM than girls.

To encourage these young males to notice their programming, both CBS and NBC have added a number of series aimed at this growing couch-potato segment. CBS went right for the merchandising jugular by adding an hour of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. The other new CBS entry is *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, based on the highly successful feature. (I stress "successful," since many are under the impression that this film was a flop, due to the negative roar of the critics. Far from being a loser, it was a runaway surprise hit that has inspired at least one upcoming theatrical feature.)

NBC has also gone for a well-known boy's toy by expanding its already successful Nintendo show (*Captain N: the Game Master*) to an hour by adding the ever-popular Mario Brothers. These Mario Brothers are the same characters seen in the syndicated *Mario Brothers* show, but the show is not. Also new for NBC will be *Gravedale High*, which features monsters — always a hit with the guys — in school, and *Kid 'n Play*, a live-action and animated musical mixture.

The Fox network, for its first SatAM schedule, also is on the lookout for boys. Two series are focused on the "gross" humor that attracts boys of all ages. *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*, based on the live-action feature of the same name, and *Pig Out*, centered on a world of pigs, both promise lots of yuck and yuks.

Merchandise Management

Though the official days of the "animated

toy commercial" (as some called such shows as *He-Man* and *My Little Pony*) are over, merchandising is still a major factor in animation...as it is in any hot property. It's interesting to note that the success of the live-action *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movie has made media heroes of creators Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird. However, many trade magazines point out another key person in the Turtles' success, Mark Freedman. Freedman is the licensing agent



Cartoon by Mark Marderosian

who took a chance on the Turtles and won.

It may be less visible, but almost every successful property, animated or not, is controlled to some degree by licensing and merchandising. Animation historians are quick to point out that Mickey Mouse became a bland character because he became the symbol of Walt Disney Productions. He suddenly could not be depicted in a way that might bring shame to the studio. Live actors, such as William (Hopalong Cassidy) Boyd refused to smoke in public — the heroic Hoppy would never do so. Likewise, Walt Disney himself had his cigarettes airbrushed out of many publicity pictures.

Today, when image is everything (people who would never buy an expensive Honda will buy a big-bucks Acura), the animation community must work around and within the merchandising department more than ever. Almost every cartoon star has this

problem. Bugs, Daffy, the Flintstones, Donald, and others must all watch their animated and comic behavior. Though none of these characters were created to sell merchandise, they sell it now...and it is big business.

How big? Garfield, who is considered one of the biggest merchandised properties around, is the subject of an annual convention for license holders. Called the "Big Deal," from Garfield's expression of "big, fat, hairy deal," this event features speeches, sample merchandise, seminars, banquets, golf, and tennis. However, the main event is the presentation.

This combination of a stockholders report, an AA meeting, and an awards show is a big production. First, licensees get to hear about how successful the character has been over the past years and the growth potential for the future. Next, various licensees give their success stories about how the character helped them, some of which are phenomenal. Finally come the awards to licensees who deserve attention for best promotion, most humorous product, and other distinctions.

This event is a time-consuming and costly venture for the people behind Garfield (United Media and Jim Davis's Paws, Inc.). The end results, though, more than make up for the expense. Not only do the licensees get to "schmooze" with creator Davis, but they get to see up close what a giant property they have. When one sees that the addition of a Garfield image can stop a downward trend in sales, or make for the largest introduction of a new product in history, or create a brand-new industry, one cannot help but be impressed. (Garfield is not alone in this sales event; Peanuts, for example, is the subject of a similar annual event.)

It is the incredible impact of the ever-increasing licensing field that will fuel animation, and probably most properties, for years to come. Not only will there be a resumption of cartoon "toy shows," but whenever new shows are introduced, that megabuck merchandising angle will be there. Economically, it will be hard to justify a cartoon on its own merits.

Scoring With Animation

The Little Mermaid's soundtrack recording has sold over one million units, making it the first animated soundtrack ever to go Platinum. (It was also the first to go Gold, selling over 500,000 copies.) No doubt the melodic, Oscar-winning score from producer Howard Ashman and Alan Menken assisted in achieving this sales figure. One

hopes it will give Disney, and other studios, more reason to release animation scores – a largely-ignored aspect of the industry.

When Disney released the soundtrack to *Oliver & Company* in 1988, it was the first full soundtrack available from Disney of a Disney animated film in over twenty years! (*The Black Cauldron* had its moody score released by Varese Sarabande.) Disney, which originally released full-length motion picture scores of its animated hits on vinyl in the fifties, had shifted policies in the early sixties, excising the majority – and sometimes all – of the instrumental music, leaving only the songs. By the seventies, the songs in the films were so few in number that only storyteller albums were released. Such excellent film scores as Henry Mancini's *The Great Mouse Detective* were never allowed to be heard on their own.

Oddly, Disney's policy on releasing film scores was somewhat behind that of the rest of the industry. *Watership Down* and *The Secret of NIMH* both had their top-notch scores released. (Overseas, animated soundtracks are quite common, in both the East and the West.) Sadly, most U.S. studios followed Disney's lead and issued only storyteller albums and/or "all the songs from" albums for their productions.

When Spielberg and company released *An American Tail*'s score to the market, there was reason to rejoice. Not only did it feature the songs, but it also included the fine musical score. In fact, all of Don Bluth's films have strong scores, whether it's the haunting melodies of *Land Before Time* or the jagged, jazzy themes found in *All Dogs Go to Heaven*. As with many live-action films, sometimes the best part of the movie is the music.

The success of *Mermaid* may encourage Disney to look more seriously at its music library. One can't be too certain that it will, though. Two recent examples show the company still has the "kids only" mentality when it comes to soundtrack recordings: when *Snow White* and *Bambi* were issued on CD, both were storyteller albums!

However, at the same time the *Bambi* CD was released, Disney released an updated LP (vinyl) edition of the *Bambi* that had much of the score intact. This new release has almost as much music as the original fifties release, before the "all the songs" cut-down version of the sixties. It's a shame this excellent score can't be updated on CD.

A final note for those who still feel vinyl will somehow survive. It should be noted that *The Little Mermaid* was released on CD and tape only. *All Dogs Go to Heaven* was released on CD, period.

Get Animated! Video Lost

Ever since the beginning of the home video revolution, some of the most famous and popular animated characters and films have been released to the marketplace on videotape and disc. However, along with these well-known and much-discussed subjects, video has also brought the release of many forgotten characters and foreign films. It is these little-known titles that are reviewed in this column.

John Cawley

Stowaways on the Ark (Celebrity Home Video)

Produced in Germany around 1986, this alternate telling of the Noah's ark story, more from the animals' viewpoint, has the right idea but the wrong execution. (In fact, a major U.S. animation supplier has recently announced plans for a feature based on this same idea.)

The central characters are a pair of woodworms who bore themselves into the ark. They soon discover other tunnels in the ship besides those that they and their ever-increasing family have drilled. When the ark begins to break apart, the animals blame the woodworms. It's only at the end that the woodworms discover a band of red-eyed termites and dispose of them. The ark makes it to land safely, and the woodworms make the ark their home, eating it into oblivion – the reason why no trace of the ark has ever been found.

This is far from an exciting plot, and the director has managed to drive the film even further away from any excitement. The worms have no real personality, and although they are worried about the new holes, they seem unworried by the hundreds of holes that they are boring. The termites are seen coming on board at the beginning, so they're no real mystery, although why their nest ends up exploding in a nuclear blast is a mystery. (Atomic termites?)

The film tries to be a little innovative by utilizing a number of different effects. Though almost totally hand-drawn cel animation, there are occasional uses of a miniature ark on water. There is even real water used in the later

scenes when the ark is sinking. However, none of these are done well enough to warrant anything more than a casual notice.

Character designs look to be borrowed from a number of sources, mostly Disney, with a bear (*The Jungle Book*'s Baloo) and elephants (from both *Jungle Book* and *Dumbo*) being most obvious. Oddly enough for the ark, most shots show only one of each species.

Noah, though, does deserve a mention. The handling of the human characters and God is somewhat surprising, and points to a whimsy that is never fully explored. A series of scenes with Noah talking to a "boss" who is no less than God open the film, and God has a bit of fun with Noah with the use of an annoying fly.

This is one of the Disneyesque features that often come out of Europe. These films feature songs (that never work), lively characters (that never have more than one dimension), and lots of movement (which many producers feel means full animation). When at the video store, display equal movement and pass this one by.

Bobobobs: the Bobular Quest (Celebrity Home Video)

This 1987 European TV series features the Bobobobs, a race of people (all with "Bob" as part of their names) who travel the universe in their spaceship. Actually, the vehicle has more to do with "ship" than "space," since it resembles an old sailing vessel. They even "row" small boats from the ship to whatever planet they are orbiting.

The name "Bob" figures heavily in the Bobobobs' vocabulary. The males are referred to as "Bobogents" or "Gentlebobbs," while many things are described as "bobular." These rounded characters have an enormous number of powers that pop up whenever necessary. When they need to hide, they suddenly have "Bobo vanishing power." When they need to move a giant mass, they all concentrate their "Bobo brain power" and move it. Even though they use those row boats to get between the ship and planets,

they can also just "will" themselves back up. These powers are never used consistently. Hence at times characters get caught, are seen, and are unable to escape certain perils.

Trying for a form of fantasy and whimsy handled best by the Smurfs, these Bobs lack the charm and character of the little blue folk. No doubt a child whose name is "Bob" might be interested in watching a show in which his name is featured so regularly. However, everyone else would do better to overlook this one.

Sidney: Banana Binge (Video Treasures)

This tape stars a wrongly forgotten cartoon star, Silly Sidney (aka Sick, Sick Sidney), an overly-sensitive, wimpy elephant, in six very funny shorts from the 1960s. Like *Bullwinkle*, these cartoon shorts are almost too funny for kids, though they'll probably laugh as much as adults will.

In this collection, Sidney, who always seems discontented, attempts several schemes to better himself, much to the irritation of his two best friends, Stanley (a lion) and Cleo (a giraffe). Whether he's trying to dream up a circus act, break his banana habit, or learn the logging business, Sidney's constant chatter and outrageous expressions make these shorts minor classics.

This tape features several cartoons originally produced in Cinemascope, which have been "squeezed," making Sidney look tall and thin rather than round. This tape is recorded in the LP (4-hour) mode.

Heckle & Jeckle: the Fox Hunt (Video Treasures)

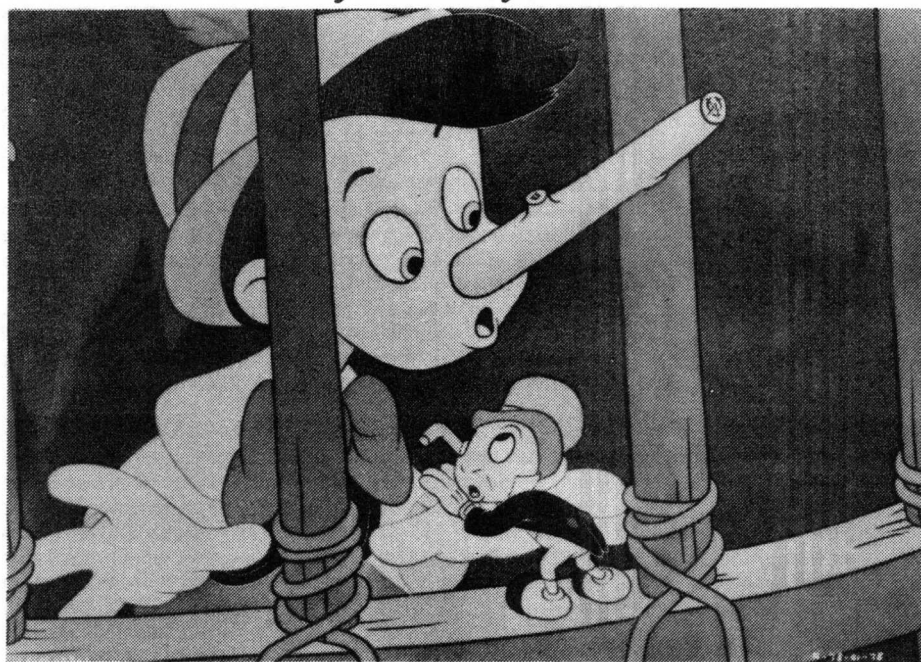
The two famous magpies star in six adventures from a two-year period (1950-1951) on this tape. Heckle & Jeckle shorts are often full of the violent slapstick found in the MGM Tom & Jerry cartoons, and the pacing can be as fast, or faster, than the best Warner cartoons. But these characters and stories have less consistency and thought put into them, a fact made plainly evident by the wide range of quality seen in the tape's cartoons.

The tape does show the range of the team's career, and offers plenty of laughs. There are furious chases, situation comedies, and atmospheric adventures. Unfortunately, the sound is slightly out of sync during one short, *King Tut's Tomb*, a great-looking film with lots of mood and intriguing female cats. This tape is also in the LP mode.

& Right & Wrong:

Morality and the Story Structure of Pinocchio

By Mark Mayerson



Pinocchio (1940), the Disney studio's second feature-length cartoon, presented story problems that were in stark contrast to those of the studio's first feature, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). In that film, the source material was a short fairy tale documented by the Brothers Grimm. The primary story challenge lay in fleshing out the tale to sustain a feature film.

This article is based on a paper given at the first conference of the Society for Animation Studies, held in Los Angeles, California last year. The next conference is scheduled to be held October 3-5, 1990, in Ottawa, Canada. More information can be obtained from the Society at 4729 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91602. This article is copyright © 1990 Mark Mayerson. Illustrations copyright © The Walt Disney Company.

With *Pinocchio* the situation was reversed: the novel by Collodi was lengthy and chock-full of incident. The challenge was to choose which incidents to preserve or adapt, and to find a way to structure them. The studio used *Pinocchio*'s ongoing moral education as its approach to each segment of the film.

The problems that *Pinocchio*'s characters must deal with are different from those in other Disney films. In *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, the main characters are victims of injustice who are eventually restored to their rightful places. In *Dumbo*, the main character is an outcast who triumphs over a birth defect. These characters are innocent of wrongdoing and have done nothing to warrant the problems they face. In *Pinocchio*, the characters Pinocchio, Jiminy Cricket, and Geppetto are faced with dilemmas, and their own actions result in them becoming victims of evil. Only by behaving in a moral fashion can

they avoid or escape evil. While they eventually learn to act correctly, the triumph over evil is never final. Each decision exposes them again to the possibility of victimization, so each decision must be morally based.

The film is structured around three episodes of capture and escape, each more dangerous than the last: Stromboli's birdcage, Pleasure Island, and Monstro's belly. In each case, the failure to know the difference between right and wrong results in a character being captured. The consequences of wrong decisions literally move the characters away from their own humanity and towards a more primitive state. In each episode, the character who knows the difference between right and wrong is the one who is able to effect the escape of the others.

Geppetto is a lonely woodcarver who lives an isolated existence. Throughout the film, he interacts with only four characters, three of whom are animals: Cleo the fish, Figaro the cat, and Monstro the whale. His isolation is softened somewhat by his work, which recreates the diversity of the outside world. His clocks and music boxes display domestic animals and people in various roles and occupations. Ducks, sheep, birds, and bees are all featured. Society is represented by a church bell-ringer, a mother spanking a child, musicians, dancers, hunters, butchers, and a drunk. However, none of these creations are capable of interaction, and Geppetto feels the lack of human companionship. For this reason, he creates the puppet Pinocchio. His wish upon a star is that Pinocchio "might be a real boy."

His wish is granted by the Blue Fairy, who brings Pinocchio to life, but does not make him human. That advanced state must be earned by learning the difference between right and wrong. As Pinocchio has no idea what the difference is, Jiminy Cricket is pressed into service as his conscience.

Pinocchio's first morning begins with a multiplane tracking shot, starting on church bells and featuring the town awakening. We see birds, tradesmen, mothers, and children. In short, we are looking at the clocks and music boxes of Geppetto's workshop made flesh. The shot concludes by focusing on Geppetto's residence as the door opens and Pinocchio prepares for his first day at school. One would think that Geppetto would accompany his new son, guiding him and protecting him in a world Pinocchio has never experienced. However Geppetto sends Pinocchio on his way alone and returns to his isolation. It is a mistake that all the characters in the film will live to

regret. Eventually, Pinocchio will be responsible for drawing Geppetto out of his workshop, but it will be under much more troubled circumstances.

Jiminy Cricket also fumbles his responsibilities on this morning. Having slept late, he reaches Pinocchio after Honest John and Gideon, two small-time crooks, have convinced the puppet to become an actor. Their motivation is to sell him to a puppeteer named Stromboli. While Jiminy informs Pinocchio that he should go to school, Pinocchio ignores him and marches off with the two villains.

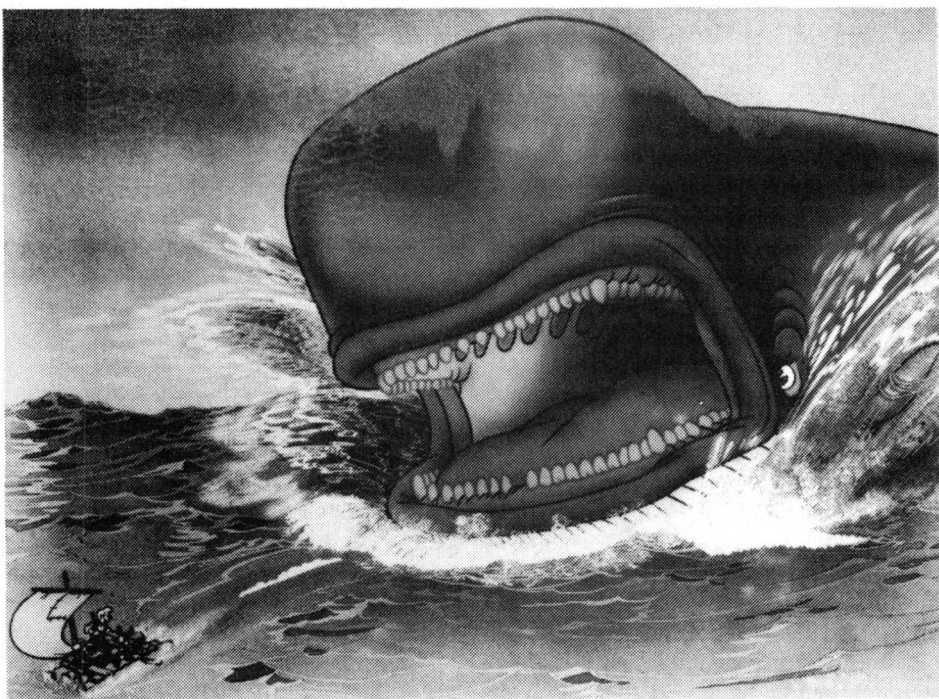
To his credit, Jiminy pursues Pinocchio, but after seeing Pinocchio become a success on stage he doubts his own advice. "Maybe I was wrong," he says, "What does an actor need with a conscience anyway?" Jiminy decides to give up his role as conscience and seeks out Pinocchio to wish him luck.

Pinocchio's success is an illusion. While he is popular with the audience, Stromboli, the puppet master, sees him as a slave and locks him in a wooden birdcage to prevent him from returning home. Having made the wrong moral decision, Pinocchio has forfeited his ability to control his own fate. This will also be a consequence of the traps to come.

When Jiminy arrives, he unsuccessfully attempts to pick the birdcage's lock. Pinocchio tries to take the blame for the situation, but Jiminy doesn't let him. "It was my fault," Jiminy says, "I shouldn't have walked out on you." His doubts about Pinocchio's choice and his abandonment of Pinocchio have rendered him powerless to free Pinocchio. In this film, only those who are morally right have the power to take positive action.

As no one has the moral high ground, it falls to the Blue Fairy to intercede. When she does so, Pinocchio fails a moral test which reveals another aspect of punishment in the film. When the Fairy asks for an explanation, Pinocchio lies. As he does, his nose grows. It not only grows, it becomes more tree-like. With each successive lie, it sprouts leaves, buds, flowers, and a nest with two birds. With the final lie, the leaves fall and the birds fly away.

In *Snow White*, the characters' inner states are expressed through the surrounding environment. As Snow White flees the Huntsman, her own fear and shock are mirrored in the threatening trees which surround her. When the Queen transforms herself into a hag, the room spins around her. When the dwarfs pursue the Queen, a thunderstorm is a measure of their rage and



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is the instrument of her death.

In *Pinocchio*, it's not the environment but the characters' own bodies that reflect their inner states. If Pinocchio is balanced between being a creature of wood and flesh, it is clear that with each lie, he becomes more a tree and less a person. Throughout the film, when a character makes a bad moral decision he reverts to a more primitive physical state. Moral transgression equals physical regression. As the Blue Fairy comments, "a boy who won't be good might just as well be made of wood." With this reprimand, she frees Pinocchio from that cage and sends him on his way.

As Pinocchio and Jiminy run home to Geppetto, Pinocchio is once again stopped by Honest John, and once again put on the wrong road. This time, he's headed for Pleasure Island, where, as Honest John says, "every day's a holiday and kids have nothing to do but play." These events are so similar to Pinocchio's first encounter with Honest John that Jiminy feels compelled to mutter "here we go again" to the audience. But this time, there is a crucial difference. Jiminy has learned from the first trap and will not falter again. He has no doubts this time that he is right. His moral certainty will enable him to free Pinocchio from the film's second trap, Pleasure Island.

The Coachman who takes the boys to the island is kidnapping them, though all the boys go willingly. It is a place where kids can run wild, indulging themselves in all the vices that polite society frowns on. Smok-

ing, drinking, vandalism, fighting, and pool playing are the activities of choice on the isle, and there is no shortage of what the Coachman refers to as "stupid little boys" who are anxious to take advantage of the opportunities.

The penalty the boys pay for making the wrong decision is to become donkeys, losing all vestiges of their humanity in the process. The Coachman then crates them and sells them. As Pinocchio was poised between tree and human in Stromboli's birdcage, the boys are poised between animal and human on the island, and the balance is tipped irrevocably to the animal. Again, moral transgression equals physical regression, and like Pinocchio in the birdcage, their lack of morals has lost them the ability to control their own destinies.

Jiminy is committed to sticking by Pinocchio this time. The verbal and physical abuse he takes at the hands of Lampwick, Pinocchio's new-found companion, causes him to walk away in anger, but he never doubts the rightness of his position. It's this moral strength that is crucial in altering Jiminy's role in the second escape. Where he was once powerless to open a lock, he now discovers the fate of the boys and is able to guide Pinocchio to an escape route before it is too late. Pinocchio avoids turning completely into a donkey, but has a donkey tail and ears as evidence of his wrong-doing.

The two escape by jumping off a cliff into the ocean. Pinocchio hesitates, but Jiminy

urges him on, explaining that it's the only way out. When they reach the shore, they head straight for Geppetto's shop, and this time they are not sidetracked. Unfortunately, Geppetto is not there. A bird sent by the blue fairy drops a note explaining that Geppetto was out searching for Pinocchio and has been swallowed by Monstro the whale.

It is finally Pinocchio's turn to exhibit some moral strength. He immediately takes off to rescue his father. Jiminy is frightened by Monstro's reputation, but Pinocchio is undeterred. When they reach the water's edge, Pinocchio shows none of his previous reluctance to jump in. Pinocchio's correct decision has entitled and empowered him to be Geppetto's rescuer. Significantly, Jiminy remains outside Monstro when Pinocchio finds Geppetto, and is a passive observer of the rescue. Pinocchio's internal conscience has developed to the point where Jiminy's guidance is no longer needed.

As the boys of Pleasure Island had their humanity submerged into their donkey bodies, Geppetto is submerged within Monstro, the film's third and most dangerous trap. Like the boys, Geppetto fails to distinguish between right and wrong. On Pinocchio's first morning of life, Geppetto sent him off to school alone. While Geppetto yearns for human interaction, he is

only willing to imitate the superficial aspects of it, in the same way his woodcarvings imitate only the superficial aspects of village life.

The film's climax contains a series of reversals. Where the moral movement within the film has thus far been one of regression, it now turns to progression. As Pinocchio frees Geppetto, he literally and morally extracts the human from the animal. Geppetto is free of Monstro, and Pinocchio has asserted his humanity over his donkey characteristics.

Ironically, the tool used to accomplish this is fire. During Pinocchio's first night of life, he naively set his finger on fire and looked at it with delight. Geppetto, realizing the threat, grabbed Pinocchio and extinguished the flame in Cleo's fishbowl. The elements of fire and water now reverse their functions. Pinocchio builds a large fire, causing Monstro to sneeze and expel them. Where fire was the threat and water the means of rescue, fire now rescues the characters and water threatens them.

The fire enrages Monstro, and he attempts to kill Pinocchio and Geppetto. He destroys their raft and leaves them swimming for their lives. In another reversal, Geppetto again seeks to separate from Pinocchio. This time he is motivated by fatherly love and not apathy. He urges Pinocchio to save

himself and swim for shore, as he is too weak to do so. Pinocchio is not about to sacrifice his father for his own freedom, and pulls him beyond some rocks to a cove that Monstro cannot reach. Geppetto is safe, but Pinocchio drowns in the rescue.

Having learned the difference between right and wrong and having acted in a moral fashion, Pinocchio has earned the right to become human. The Blue Fairy revives him, and all traces of his wooden and animal selves vanish. Humanity has triumphed over lower states of being.

Pinocchio and Geppetto celebrate, and Jiminy leaves, claiming that "this is where I came in." But it really isn't. While the joy of Pinocchio's first night has been recaptured, the characters have developed a stronger moral base. Pinocchio has been transfigured by his moral growth. Though the characters have seen their dreams come true, it has taken far more than just wishing on a star. It has taken the ability to tell right from wrong in a world where morality has very tangible implications.

What type of morality does this film champion? Pinocchio's initial dilemma between going to school or going on the stage implies a sort of middle-class, Boy-Scout morality. I think the film's choice of school has to be seen in the context of the film's later choices. Morality is not an abstract system that has to be adhered to for its own sake. Morality in this film clearly represents the opposites of selfishness and selflessness. Will a character indulge himself with no regard for the others in his life, or will he act in a way that strengthens his relationship with his loved ones? The film sees morality as a structure for strengthening the bonds between parents and children and between friends. It is this aspect of the film that gives it its emotional power and prevents it from degenerating into a lecture on proper behavior.

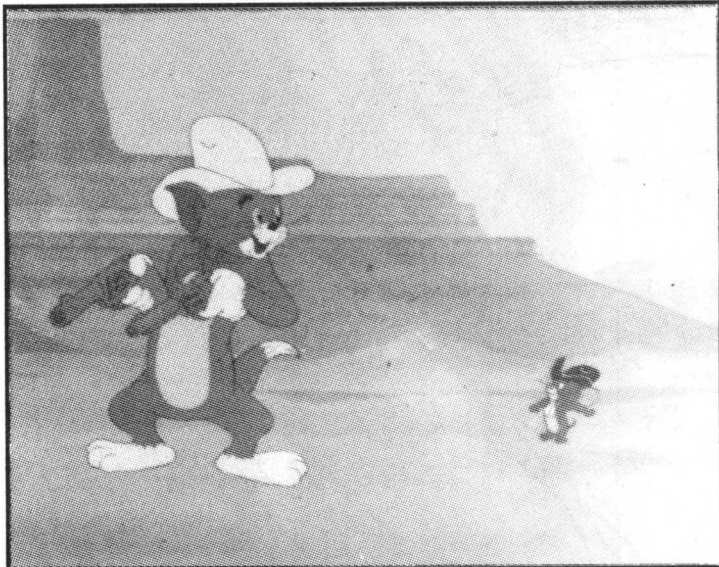
The villains in this film are immoral because they are so self-indulgent. Their search for gratification threatens everyone they come in contact with. Their moral choices do not support others, they exploit others. Unlike those of other Disney movies, *Pinocchio's* villains are not neutralized or destroyed. Honest John, Stromboli, the Coachman, and Monstro all live on to continue being evil and to prey on the morally weak.

It is the task of each character in this film to constantly assert his morality through his decisions. Behaving in a moral fashion is the only way to avoid becoming a victim of exploitation, to maintain ties to loved ones, and the only way to become truly human.

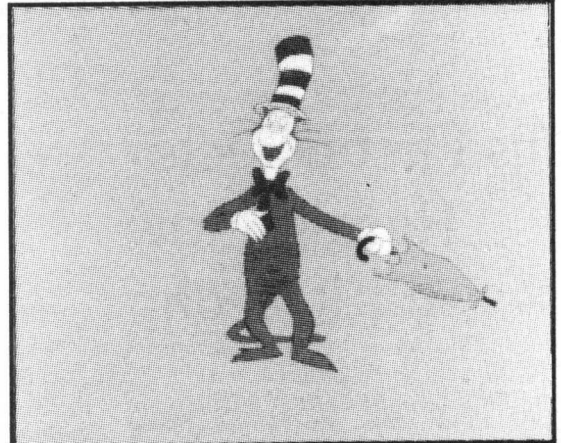
Roy and Walt Disney (center) at the time of Pinocchio's release, flanked by two gentlemen whose identity is unknown to us. (If you know, please tell us.)



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Tom & Jerry: Original color production cel from POSSE CAT Hand inked, with an appropriate background. MGM, 1954 Price: \$950



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Pinocchio Watching His Nose Grow:
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Roger Rabbit's Roots

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His First Director Recalls How It All Began

By Darrell Van Citters



Who Framed Roger Rabbit was a hugely successful venture for The Walt Disney Company, one that has in no small way influenced the form and volume of contemporary animation. But with the media blitz surrounding a film of this scale, it's often difficult to know where the hype ends and the truth begins. Readers of the popular media might come away with the sense that those who executed the final film were also the ones who discovered and nurtured the project through the long and arduous process of development. It's the stuff of legends – the magic touch of inspired genius.

In fact, it's a common occurrence in Hollywood for a film to go through a number of hands before reaching fruition. Regardless of who initiated a project, the ones who see it realized will be the ones who have the clout to get it into production, and the end product will, of course, reflect their vision. Occasionally, the preceding visions are dismissed entirely, but more often than not the final production cannot help but be influenced by earlier work on the project. The intent, therefore, of this article, is not to discount what came after, but simply to recount what came before.

Back in 1981, Marc Sturdivant, a talented staff producer with the Disney studio, was casting around for his next project and discovered the manuscript for a soon-to-be-

published book, *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*. The story dealt with the notion that the stars of comic strips co-existed in the real world of human beings. Sensing the potential for animation, Marc elicited the reactions of several members of the Disney animation staff. What better place to do a picture with animation than at Disney? While I can't recall the response of others, I was excited by the possibilities inherent in the material.

Enough other people must have concurred, because rights to the manuscript were purchased, and with the blessings of Tom Wilhite, then head of the motion picture division, the project proceeded into development. Tom had an eye for up-and-coming young talent, and has had a direct impact on the careers of former Disney staffers including Tim Burton (director of *Beetlejuice* and *Batman*), John Lasseter (Academy Award winner for *Tin Toy*), and Jerry Rees (director of the critically-acclaimed *The Brave Little Toaster*). At the time, I had just completed an eccentric little short called *Fun With Mr. Future* under Tom's management, and was already associated with iconoclastic, oddball projects. Tom and Marc must have felt I was appropriate for *Roger Rabbit*, for I was chosen to help develop and eventually direct its animation. Of equal importance was the selection of Mike Giamo, a gifted young designer with a flair for breathing personality into his

drawings.

I think what initially attracted us to *Roger Rabbit* was the the potential for unique character relationships. At the core, this was a "buddy movie," but a buddy movie with a twist. We would be developing a friendship between a live human being and a drawing. To us, there was nothing more challenging – or exhilarating – than the possibility of successfully pulling this off. Once the live-action was filmed, we would be creating the other half of the relationship out of thin air.

This was the very quintessence of character animation. When I use that term, I refer not just to animated characters, but to personalities who are defined by the way they act and react – that is, in a physical sense have a plausibility that the viewer relates to, and in an emotional sense reveal a truth or feeling common to us all.

We saw the picture as essentially a live-action film – some of the stars just happened to be animated. It was our feeling that, in this context, we could create the kind of interest in an animated character that would allow *Roger Rabbit* to cross over into the adult market, and perhaps allow the moviegoing public to see animation as something more than babysitting fodder.

We designed Roger to look like a goon. We patterned his appearance after both the Tex Avery and Bob Clampett design sensibilities. For some reason, big noses figure

prominently in many of their character designs; this was, for us, the archetypal "cartoon" look. We had no interest in designing in a more complex style – the purpose of this simple, comic design was to belie Roger's interior, for our aim was to imbue an outwardly zany character with emotional depth and heart.

Roger, despite his best intentions, appeared and behaved like a clown. Everyone knows the antics cartoon characters are capable of, but what are these guys really like? What does a cartoon character think of a career that involves continual physical humiliation, defying the forces of nature and popping one's eyes out of one's head every time something amazing happens? What's his personal life like? And what does all this do to his head?

While the wild physical action was integral to the story we wanted to tell, it was the actors behind these actions that intrigued us. The combination of cartoons and humans was to be more than a gimmick – we would be bridging the gap with such a relationship, creating an emotional relationship as well as a physical one. (Incidentally, Roger was to be voiced by the then barely-known Paul Reubens. Paul had both an excitability and a naive quality to his voice that we felt was essential to the character's personality. Despite his firmly established role as Pee Wee Herman, Paul is an excellent vocal actor, and gave us exceptional readings.)

Additionally, the relationship between Jessica and Eddie Valiant was of prime interest. Imagine, we thought, a live human being being excited over the underplayed movements and suggestions of an animated seductress. The potential was enormous – finally, sophisticated interplay in character animation! As with Roger, our goal with Jessica was not to portray her as a one-dimensional character (the obvious *femme fatale*), but to peer beneath the layers, to glimpse into the thought processes that revealed her true persona.

When it came to Baby Herman, we resisted the temptation to contrast his baby-like appearance with a tough-guy voice. This had already been explored quite successfully in Chuck Jones's *Baby Buggy Bunny*. Our intent was to pay homage to the past, not steal from it. We chose to play against Herman's appearance with a rather haughty, Ronald Colmanesque voice – to make him an elitist actor who resented his typecasting in films and lived, instead, for "the theater."

I mentioned before that we wanted to treat the cartoon characters as actors. When we

Drawings of Roger Rabbit and Jessica Rabbit (below) as they looked during Darrell Van Citters' work on the Roger project: opposite page, by Mike Giamo; this page, top three drawings by Chris Buck, bottom drawing by Giamo. Copyright © The Walt Disney Company.



initiated the idea of cameo appearances by established cartoon stars, we steered clear of using "feature" characters. They appeared in just one film and were integral to that story. They never had any other roles, and consequently didn't seem to fit any definition of actor. Characters from short cartoons, on the other hand, usually appeared in many films and in many roles, just as live actors did.

As we searched for a director for the film's live action, our chief concern was that a candidate might see only the surface of cartoon animation – the wild gags and fast timing, the impossible situations and enormous pliability the characters were endowed with – and overlook that it was the personalities of the characters thrust into unusual situations that created the humor. In short, we were afraid that in the wrong hands, we might end up with the animated equivalent of an *Animal House*.

This fear, coupled with the studio's reluctance to invest what was then a \$12 million budget in such a risky enterprise, delayed *Roger Rabbit*'s production for four years. Ultimately, the new Disney regime was able to interest Amblin Entertainment in the project. At that point, *Roger Rabbit* was no longer looking for a director; a director was looking for *Roger Rabbit*, and the picture took on a life of its own. The rest, as they say, is history.

Roger Rabbit Two: the Toon Platoon

Prequel Script Features Wartime Strife, Story of Roger's Youth

What's in *Roger Rabbit*'s future? What secrets does his past hold? Both questions may be answered reasonably soon, if Disney and Amblin, as has been reported, put the sequel to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* into production in the fairly-near future.

Judging from a 1989 first-draft screenplay by Nat Mauldin and Jeff Stein, entitled *Roger Rabbit Two: the Toon Platoon*, *Roger's* second feature film will actually be a prequel, set just before and during America's involvement in the Second World War. As the subtitle suggests, much of the action involves Roger's participation in a Toon regiment during the war. Roger's friend Eddie Valiant appears only in a cameo, and there is a large cast of new animated and flesh-and-blood characters, including a young actor whose love-hate relationship with Roger mirrors the bunny's relations with Eddie in the first film.

Without revealing too many of the screenplay's secrets – and it has some clever ones – I'll note that we learn about Roger's youth (he's the adopted son of a human family of Kansas farmers), how he acquired his red overalls and polka-dot bow tie, how he met Jessica (she began her showbiz career as an accomplished radio actress), and how she

became a bombshell (her beauty being concealed by conservative dress and hairstyle for most of this story). Roger himself spends much of the film searching for his rabbit mother, and eventually learns some startling things about his family tree. The story does an intelligent job of making Roger a bit more complex a fellow while remaining consistent with the rabbit of the first feature and two subsequent shorts.

There are also the expected Toon guest-star appearances, primarily by Disney and Warner's characters, although the disaster-inducing black cat from Tex Avery's *Bad Luck Blackie* plays a significant and funny role. While there are fewer guest-star setpieces than in the first film, the Toon Platoon's all-star membership might put a lot of famous characters on-screen for much of the story.

Mauldin and Stein's script includes some excellent moments, as well as some humor that seems a bit modern for a tale set almost fifty years ago. A movie based on it would be unlikely to equal the sensation the first one created (how could it?), but it would be something more than the unimaginative rehash that follow-up films so often are.

Harry McCracken

Roger's Delinquent Cousin

By Karl Cohen



Dan O'Neill's *Roger Rabbit*. From *Tortoise and the Hare* #1.

Back in 1971, Dan O'Neill created "The Early Adventures of Roger Rabbit," a comic-book story about a good-for-nothing drug dealer that appeared in the underground comic *The Tortoise and the Hare* #1. O'Neill's tale is about a bear who accuses Roger of selling him pure talcum powder as cocaine. The Rabbit replies, "Did you get off?" and convinces the bear that he will give him some of his personal stash of 100% pure Columbian cocaine. O'Neill

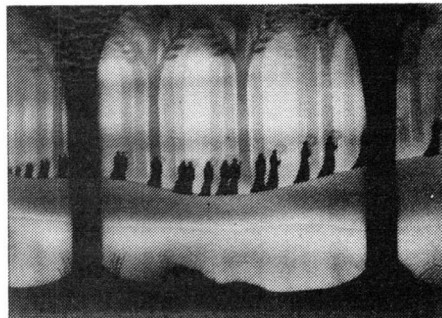
comments in the margin, "Once again...dear reader...greed conquers anger." Back at Roger's house, his wife gives the bear a cup of coffee laced with strychnine. The story ends with Roger asking, "I'm not sure, dear....Should we put our new rug in the living room – or the bedroom?"

The history of *Roger Rabbit* might have been quite different if O'Neill had continued with his version of Roger. His Roger was a parody of the rabbit in Aesop's fable

"The Tortoise and the Hare," and the story was published in a magazine that parodied public-domain stories that Disney had used in his Silly Symphony shorts. At the time, Disney was already suing O'Neill, Gary Hallgren, Bobby London, and Ted Richards for \$700,000 over two other O'Neill comics, *Air Pirates* #1 and #2. O'Neill had dared to show Mickey Mouse shooting dope and going into an outhouse. The artists' defense that the work was parody was unsuccessful, and part of the settlement was their giving up rights to some of their work and/or agreeing not to continue using certain images. Roger was one of the characters O'Neill lost rights to in the settlement. O'Neill talks about the lawsuit at length in the documentary feature *Comic Book Confidential*.

O'Neill's *Roger Rabbit* was not his first or last controversial creation. In the late 1960s his nationally-syndicated comic strip *Odd Bodkins* was dropped from newspapers when he began to be critical of the U.S.'s role in Vietnam. His most recent book, *Farewell to the Gipper*, is a collection of cartoons about Ronald Reagan.

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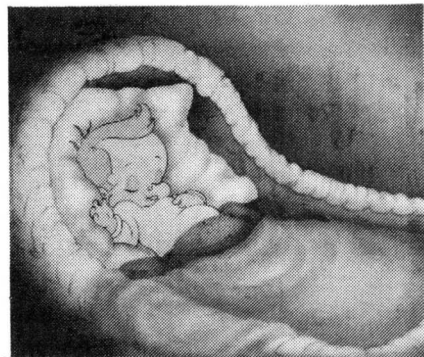
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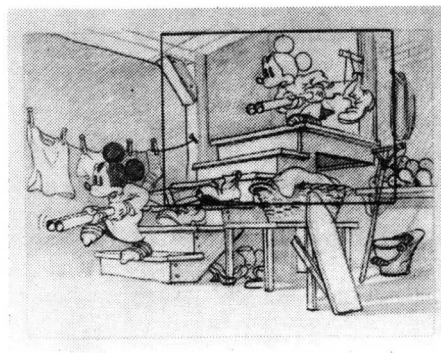
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Birthday Boy Bunny

Winners by a Hare

Bugs's Greatest Films, as Voted
by Animato's Readers

Bugs Bunny, being the star that he is, has naturally made many cartoons that Animato readers have deemed favorites in our "Animato Film Poll" feature. The following list, compiled by Mike Ventrella and with comments by Dave Mackey (DM) and Harry McCracken (HM), examines the twenty highest-ranking Bugs cartoons in the poll, a good sampling of the works of most of Bugs's directors.

1. What's Opera, Doc? (1957)

Directed by Chuck Jones; story by Michael Maltese

The cartoon as Cliffs Notes: everything you ever wanted to know about Wagner — and Bugs vs. Elmer — in six minutes. But what's the difference between this and any other Warner Bros. cartoon of the era? After all, it has same animators, writers, background artists, voices, musicians, and figurehead producer as the other cartoons; really, all Jones did was give Elmer a spear and magic helmet, and Bugs a Brunhilde wig and fake breasts, and put Elmer's standard preamble — "Be vewwy quiet... I'm hunting wabbits" to Wagner music.

The difference is that Chuck Jones was the only cartoon director at any studio, Disney's included, to have (a) the balls to pull it off, and (b) the technical acumen and talented staff of animators to do it right. And he created the most awe-inspiring cartoon to come out of Hollywood — or any place else — that season, or any other season. (DM)

2. The Rabbit of Seville (1957)

Directed by Chuck Jones; story by Michael Maltese

This, too, is Opera, Doc.

An outdoor amphitheatre (a Jones venue later re-explored in *Baton Bunny*) stages a production of "Barber of Seville," with Eduardo Selzeri, Michele Maltese, and Carlo Jonzi. We never get to meet those losers. The Bugs-Elmer chase winds up in said amphitheatre. The curtain rises with Elmer at center stage and Bugs, eager to play his part, in barber attire. The befuddled conductor strikes a "what the hell" pose and leads the orchestra in the overture anyway. Elmer is next, "so next" in fact, and so begin the tonsorial escapades. Elmer seems to be the character least in need of a shave and a haircut, so this makes the proceedings even more ludicrous. It all ends up with Elmer as Bugs's transvestite bride. Libretto only in the first half, with Jones wisely letting the music and animation put the gags over afterward (except for Bugs's parting "Next?"). Jones' regular animators are joined here by the estimable Emery Hawkins, who at one time or another worked under all four of the main postwar Warner directors — Freleng, Jones, McKimson, and Davis — and was later a favorite of Richard Williams. (DM)

3. Duck! Rabbit! Duck! (1953)

Directed by Chuck Jones; story by Michael Maltese

This, the third and final cartoon of the Bugs-Daffy-Elmer Rabbit Season trilogy, is distinguished by its winter setting. Daffy again tries to bamboozle Elmer into thinking it's Rabbit Season. Bugs, obviously the brains of the bunch, helps Daffy Duck issue a license to shoot a Fricaseeing Duck, which Elmer does. As prompted by Daffy's dialogue, Bugs holds up signs for Goat Season, Dirty Skunk Season, Pigeon Season, and Mongoose Season, all of which result in Daffy being at the wrong end of Elmer's rifle. Daffy gets shot up so much, he turns masochistic and asks Elmer to shoot him some more, testifying that he loves "the smell of burnt feathers and gunpowder and cordite." Elmer is disposed of when a game warden, really Bugs in disguise, tells him it's Baseball Season (in winter yet!), then throws out the first ball, which a deranged Elmer begins shooting at. The fact is that it's really Duck Season (remember: Daffy took down a whole bunch of Duck Season signs off the trees at the start of the cartoon), which is cue enough for every hunter in the woods to shoot Daffy up even more. Bugs, of course, is the only one who escapes with his sanity intact. The Rabbit-Duck season cartoons work because Bugs is crafty enough to take advantage of his opponents' weaknesses; Fudd takes anything anyone says at face value; and Daffy is stupid enough to say those things. (DM)

4. The Wacky Wabbit (1942)

Directed by Bob Clampett; story by Warren Foster

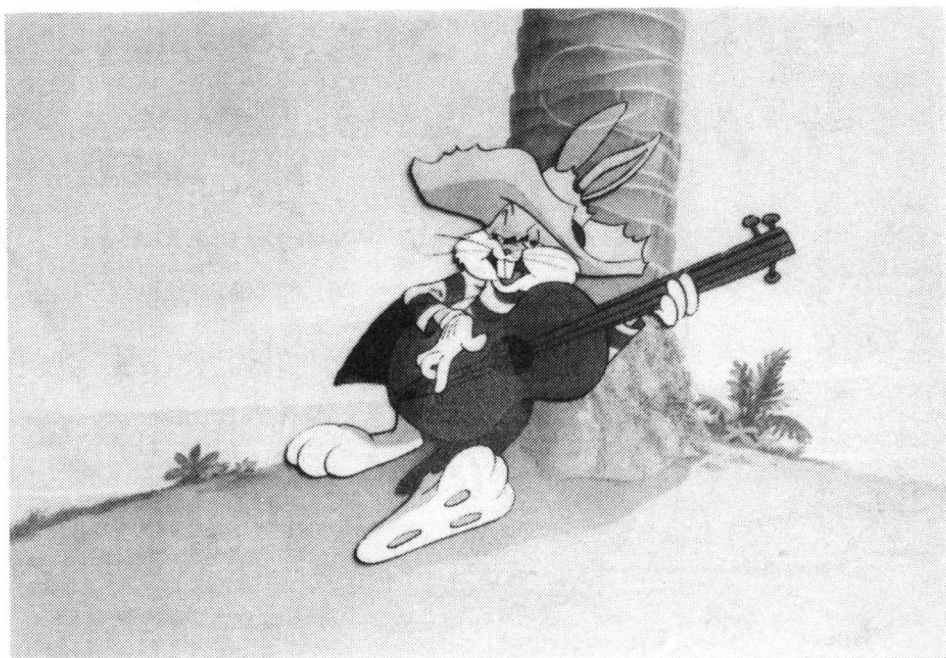
Bugs asks (perhaps for the first time) in this film, "Ain't I a stinker?" Maybe so, but he always comes out smelling like a rose.

Out in the desert, where we view mountains, mesas, and a Buy War Bonds poster, fat Elmer Fudd, carrying a backpack about four times larger than he is, is prospecting for gold, with the scwewy wabbit out to

A Celebration of Bugs Bunny's First Five Decades

cause trouble. Bugs first reveals himself to Elmer wearing a desert skull, which spooks Elmer. The dynamite Elmer throws into a fresh excavation is repeatedly thrown back at him by Bugs. Though the firecracker is a dud, Bugs gives Elmer the illusion of a loud explosion by yelling "BANG!" and clanging a pot over his head. Bugs shows Elmer his gold tooth, which is no big deal to Elmer as he has one too. Major gag: Bugs cuts Elmer's suspenders and shirt, revealing a corset underneath. Elmer defends his abdominal appliance: "Don't waugh, I'll bet pweny of you men wear one of these." After a hand-to-hand struggle, Elmer finally finds his gold — by extracting his own gold tooth.

In the early 1940s Elmer Fudd was turned



Cel and background from 8-Ball Bunny (1950). Courtesy Pam Martin. All illustrations accompanying this article are copyright © Warner Bros. Inc.

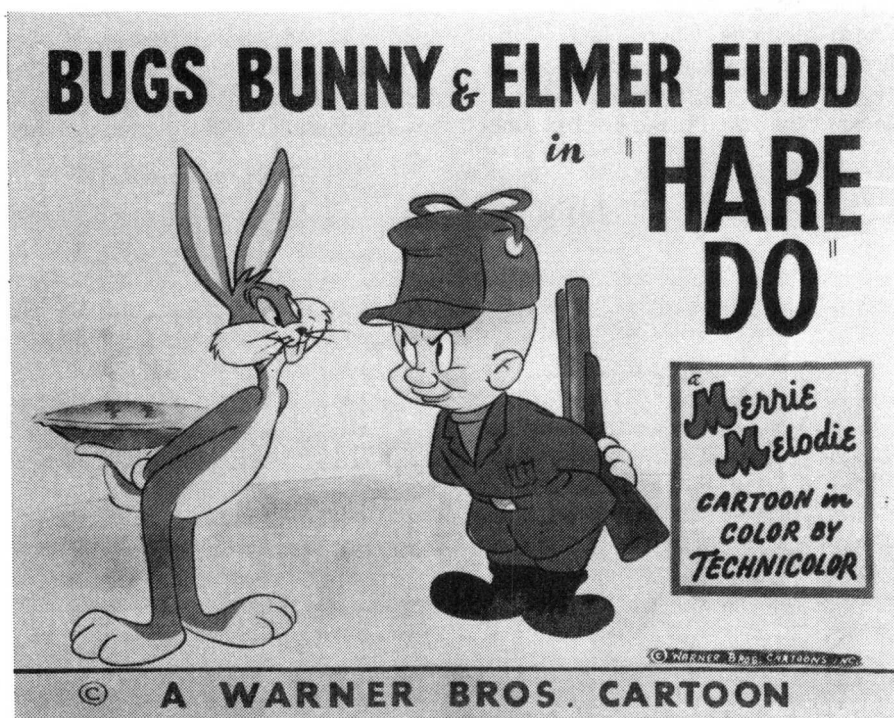
into a rather obese character, perhaps to match the rotund proportions of the man who voiced him, Arthur Q. Bryan. In white shirt with rolled up sleeves and black slacks held up by suspenders, Fudd seems to resemble an accountant on holiday rather than the sportsman suggested by *A Wild Hare*. Thankfully this experiment was short-

lived, and the svelte Fudd returned a few films later. (DM)

5. *Hare-Way to the Stars* (1958) Directed by Chuck Jones; story by Michael Maltese

Chuck Jones was fascinated by space opera just as much as he was by grand opera. Several times in his career, Jones looked to the stars for inspiration, and outside of the fabulous *Duck Dodgers in the 24-1/2th Century*, this is the best of the out-of-this-world adventures of the Looney Tunes gang.

Having had one too many the night previous, Bugs awakes to find the tunnel to his hole considerably longer than usual. It's actually a rocket that's been parked over Bugs' hole, which blasts the rabbit into space. Bugs winds up on Mars, where Marvin is out to blow up the Earth, which compels Bugs to play hero and save the planet. Bugs succeeds in wresting the Illudium Q-36 Explosive Space Modulator from Marvin, who sends Instant Martians (just add water) after Bugs. To get home, Bugs hijacks a flying saucer, switches the Modulator (which blows up in Marvin's face) for the bowl of Instant Martians, and high-tails it back to Earth. Bumpy roads back home cause Bugs to dump the Martian pellets into an open manhole. Bugs warns us, "Run for the hills, folks, or you'll be up to your armpits in martians!" Bugs heeds his own advice as the pavement around the manhole begins to buckle under the bulk of



"HOLD THE LION, PLEASE"



A **LEON SCHLESINGER** PRODUCTION

the now-activated army of Instant Martians!

Maurice Noble designed a futuristic floating space city for this cartoon; he had background man Philip DeGuard render these designs of transparent and translucent panels on black paper rather than the conventional white stock used for animation backgrounds. The Instant Martians resemble the space creatures Sylvester kept seeing (and Porky never seemed to) in *Jumpin' Jupiter*. (DM)

6. *Mad as a Mars Hare* (1963)

Directed by Chuck Jones and Maurice Noble; story by John Dunn

Marvin Martian, minding his own business, pontificates on how "man is the most interesting insect on earth," going on and on as characters in these talky sixties cartoons seem to do. A rocket lands; on board is Bugs Bunny, the "expendable" rabbit reluctantly sent into space again as he was fifteen years earlier in *Haredevil Hare*. Bugs's earthbound commander (whose relationship with Bugs is somewhat akin to the relationship between Mork from Ork and Orson) lures Bugs out of the ship with an aluminum carrot, raising the Earth flag. Now Marvin's on the scene again, defending his turf. Pistol gags are repeated from *Duck Dodgers*, with the final pistol rendering Bugs a Neanderthal rabbit, eating the aluminum carrot ("lots of i-ren") to prove his lack of evolution.

This is a cartoon typical of the malaise prevalent at Warner in the 1960s. It was

time to do something different, as evidenced by Friz Freleng's initial work at his own studio, and Chuck Jones's continued quality as an independent producer throughout the 1960s and 1970s. (DM)

7. *Wabbit Twouble* (1941)

Directed by Bob Clampett; story by Dave Monahan

The portly version of Elmer Fudd is vacationing in Jellostone National Park, when a fairly primitive Bugs Bunny decides to make life tough for him. (During this early period in his career, he doesn't need much provok-

ing to do so.) Bugs's pranks include painting Fudd's sunglasses dark blue so he assumes it's night and retires; then immediately crowing, so poor Elmer rises and shines for the next day. When Elmer is arrested and jailed for destroying the park's sign in rage, he thinks he'll finally get some rest — until he discovers that Bugs is his cellmate.

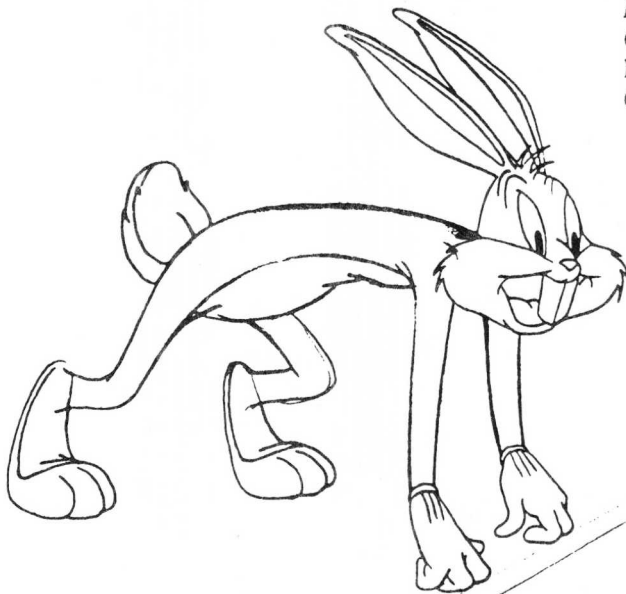
Like most of Bob Clampett's Bugs Bunny cartoons, this one (his first) gives Elmer at least as significant a role as Bugs's. In fact, Bugs even disappears from the action for a crucial stretch at the end, when Elmer is chased about the park by a grizzly bear (who's also imprisoned in the short's conclusion). The fact that this film's credits are written in Fudd-talk ("Wobert Cwampett," etc.) has been often commented on; that the credits also feature a stunning multi-plane-like scene of Elmer driving through gorgeous canyon backgrounds has not. (HM)

8. *A Wild Hare* (1940)

Directed by Tex Avery; story by Rich Hogan

Not the cartoon that started it all, since there were a number of experimental lab rabbit cartoons during '38-'39, but the one that most successfully crystallized the characters of both Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd, and started exhibitors clamoring for more rabbit pictures — a star is born.

A scene-by-scene recounting doesn't do this film justice, since you've seen everything in it somewhere else down the line. Suffice it to say that all of the standard Bugs riffs were perfected (some originated in the lab experiments) in this cartoon: Elmer's



Pencil art from the 1940s
Capitol Records album Bugs
Bunny and the Tortoise.
Courtesy Pam Martin.

pleas for silence as he stalks wild hare. Bugs's cool in the face of danger, even kissing his adversaries. The crazy-like-a-fox Bugs that's several generations removed from the "gooney looney tune touched in the head" concoction of Ben Hardaway. The sham death throes after Bugs has allowed Elmer to shoot him, which send

Unlike Elmer, Yosemite Sam really does "hate rabbits," as he exclaims in disgust so often, and his nervous collapse from excessive hatred at one point in this cartoon is actually touching. (Even Bugs seems to think so, and stops briefly to console him.) This film seems to have inspired the stock publicity pose of Yosemite Sam in pirate garb, a

tears of frustration, something it's hard to imagine the later, cooler-headed Bugs doing. This rabbit's remote relationship to the Bugs of the later 1940s and 1950s is subtly underlined by the fact that he appears to reside not in a rabbit hole, but in a sizable mansion; he really is a different, but equally funny, character — one that bears as much resemblance to Jones's Daffy as his Bugs. The ending, in which the gambling rabbits commit group suicide upon realizing their mistake, is often cut out of TV airings. (HM)

Preliminary sketch from the Pas a Deux sequence of Chuck Jones's What's Opera, Doc? (1957). Courtesy Pam Martin.



Elmer into teary convulsions — at which time Bugs miraculously revives to kick the unknowing hunter's ass. Who'd have known that fifty years after the release of this, just one of forty cartoons (a studio record) Warner put into release in 1940, we'd be throwing a year-long birthday jubilee for its star? History's proven *A Wild Hare* to be more than your run-of-the-mill Merrie Melodie. (DM)

9. *Buccaneer Bunny* (1948)

Directed by Friz Freleng; story by Michael Maltese and Tedd Pierce

This pirate-themed cartoon is not Freleng's greatest Bugs Bunny-Yosemite Sam confrontation, but it is a typically amusing and well-crafted example of the series. As usual, Bugs and Sam are virtually the only characters (well, Sam's parrot does make a walk-on appearance), and the action revolves around their chase in a distinctive setting, in this case Sam's pirate ship. The funniest sequence has Bugs repeatedly tossing lit matches into the powder hold, and a fed-up Sam resolving not to stop him and having a very hard time doing so.

style he usually eschewed in favor of cowboy or other gear. (HM)

10. *Tortoise Wins By a Hare* (1943)

Directed by Bob Clampett; story by Warren Foster

To call this a cartoon in which Bob Clampett violates every rule that Chuck Jones established for the Bugs Bunny cartoon is in no way to demean it: since Clampett wreaked his merry havoc several years before Jones perfected his theories, you might call Jones the transgressor. In any event, this film, a sequel to Avery's *Tortoise Beats Hare*, features a wild-eyed, manic-depressive Bugs who screams almost every line of dialogue at the top of his lungs. His ranting and raving concerns Cecil Tortoise's supremacy over him as a racer, which he attempts to overcome by donning a homemade shell and turtle-like skullcap himself. This leads a gambling syndicate made up of rabbits to try to prevent Bugs from winning the race, especially after the turtle dresses up in a rabbit suit.

At this point, Clampett's Bugs is a creature ruled by his emotions; he often bursts into

11. *Rabbit's Kin* (1952)

Directed by Robert McKimson; story by Tedd Pierce

Robert McKimson, that least-appreciated of the major Warner's directors, made some Bugs Bunny cartoons that rank with the rabbit's best — *Gorilla My Dreams*, *Hillbilly Hare*, and the particularly splendid *Rebel Rabbit* among them. This strange little film, however, is hardly among his finest. The bunny's opponent here is the extraordinarily stupid Pete Puma, an indescribably-voiced (by Stan Freberg) character who was inspired by the not-very-well-remembered comedian Frank Fontaine. Also in on the activities is an odd little Thumper-like rabbit in whom Bugs takes a rather paternal interest. Gag highlights include the Puma's disguise as the little rabbit's mother, Mrs. Rabbit, and Bugs's appearance as Pete's second cousin, Paul.

There's no doubt that this is a well-remembered Bugs Bunny cartoon, and notable for Pete Puma's only appearance (although Bugs refers to some previous, off-screen encounters between them). If most of the cartoons on this list are high comedy, call this one a camp classic. (HM)

12. *A Hare Grows in Manhattan* (1947)

Directed by Friz Freleng; story by Michael Maltese and Tedd Pierce

One of Friz Freleng's delightful period pieces, this cartoon, after an introductory scene set at Bugs's Hollywood pad, fades into a flashback to the bunny's days of "sturdy young rabbithood" in New York's East Side. (He wears Little Lord Fauntleroy duds and does the snappiest tap-dancing rendition of "The Daughter of Rosie O'Grady" you'll ever see.) A pack of dogs pegs Bugs as an easy mark and begins to bully him — "dogpile on the rabbit!" — and the gang's leader pursues the rabbit through a nightclub, an automat, and other wonderfully-atmospheric New York locales.

While a good-sized chunk of the short is taken up by Bugs's evasion of the derby-wearing bulldog (who's a close relative of

Freleng's later bulldog Spike), it's what leads up to the chase that makes this cartoon so memorable. If we might permit ourselves to be mildly critical in this celebration of Bugs, the brilliant set-up that lapses into a standard series of fairly routine chase gags is a weakness of several otherwise-excellent Freleng cartoons. (HM)

13. *Bully For Bugs* (1953)

Directed by Chuck Jones; story by Michael Maltese

The story behind this cartoon is now legendary: producer Ed Selzer spied Chuck Jones drawing a bull and decreed "Bull-fights aren't funny."

A mortal matador is chased out of the Plaza De Toros just as Bugs tunnels into the ring, forgetting that left turn at Albuquerque. In classic style, Bugs doesn't even think of evasive action until the bull rams him. "Of course you realize this means war," so Bugs appears in full matador dress to the oles of the crowd (both in the arena and the theater) to give the bull his comeuppance. If this isn't funny, then what is?

Carl Stalling's evocative score for this cartoon, featuring all his stock bullfight themes, is one of the best of the almost 600 cartoons he scored over his 22-year career at WB. And one master acknowledged another when Friz Freleng borrowed the

opening scenes of this cartoon to set the atmosphere of his 1963 cartoon *Mexican Cat Dance*. (DM)

14. *Little Red Riding Rabbit* (1944)

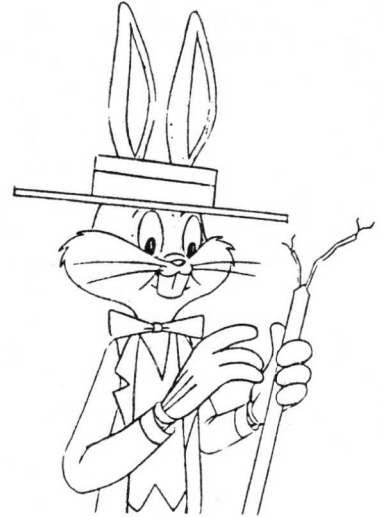
Directed by Friz Freleng; story by Michael Maltese

Little Red Riding Hood, an obnoxious bespectacled adolescent with an obnoxious Bea Benaderet voice, is taking a bunny rabbit to her Grandma's — "to have, see?" The Wolf, as usual, is on the case, filling in for Granny (working the swing shift at Lockheed). The Wolf, just wanting to eat the rabbit, tries to get rid of Red, doing the usual "what big teeth" bit. After a chase, Bugs leads a singalong of "Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet." The Bunny, hiding under the Wolf's gown, burns him with a hot coal from the fireplace, sending him skyward. The Wolf lands straddled across a table and a chair, with a shovelful of hot coals only inches away from his rear end. Even the weight of the world can't make the Wolf wear the world's first pair of hot pants, but at the last moment Bugs substitutes the shrilly Red for the Wolf, with whom Bugs shares a carrot at the iris out.

This is a notable cartoon, as it marks Mel Blanc's first-ever screen credit for voice characterization, though it's also a tour de force for Bea Benaderet. The wolf-girl

cartoons of Tex Avery would eventually eclipse this tale twice told. Lots of keen sound effects, including some of Bob Clampett's beyooping and Treg Brown's trombone gobbling. (DM)

Animation drawing from a 1960s TV appearance. Courtesy June Schneider.



15. *The Big Snooze* (1946)

Directed by Bob Clampett (uncredited); no writer credited

Any written description of this relatively little-known Clampett film is going to sound even more nonsensical than the cartoon actually is, but here goes: Elmer Fudd tears up his contract with Mr. Warner, dismayed with his place in show business after a particularly embarrassing bout with Bugs's old hollow-log-leading-off-a-cliff gag (borrowed here from Avery's *All This and Rabbit Stew*). When Elmer gets a little west and wewaxation by napping outdoors, Bugs knocks himself out with sleeping pills, whereupon his dream-self enters Elmer's dream world and makes surrealistic, Clampett-style mischief. For reasons that are anything but clear, all this convinces Elmer to repair his Warner's contract and get back to work.

While nobody other than Bob Clampett could have made this cartoon, there are moments that hint at his stylistic influences. A pack of decidedly Avery-style wolves pops up at one point, and the surrealistic gags in the dream sequence are reminiscent of both *The Three Caballeros* and the pink-elephant sequence in *Dumbo*. In turn, both the storyline and visuals seem especially close kin to the cartoons of John (Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures) Kricfalusi, who has singled out Clampett as a seminal influence on his work. (HM)

(Continued on page 49)

Bugs seems to be reaching for the sky in this drawing, another piece of art from a later (circa 1950s) Capitol Records album. Courtesy Pam Martin.



Rabbit Rhapsodies: Three Tributes to Bugs

Bugs Bunny has always been something of a miracle to me. The only constant thing about Bugs during his career was Mel Blanc's voice. Numerous writers, directors, layout men and countless animators all worked with the character. To paraphrase Walt Whitman, Bugs Bunny contained multitudes. But he was such a strong personality that these people and their individual approaches didn't dilute him. Instead, he gained strength from the best they had to offer. Bugs Bunny is such a completely realized personality that there are times I think that he wasn't invented, but discovered.

While it's wonderful to celebrate Bugs's fiftieth birthday (What about *Porky's Hare Hunt*, *Hare-um*, *Scare-um* and *Elmer's Candid Camera*? Are they pre-natal?), we're really celebrating his first 25 years. The last 25 have seen him come out of retirement on occasion, but he hasn't been the same. People say that cartoon characters don't age and that they can live forever, but the people who bring Bugs to life do age and some have left us for good. Let's hope that Warner Bros. will provide Bugs with many more opportunities to shine and that Bugs will continue to draw the best from the people who draw him.

Mark Mayerson

Much has been written over the years about who Bugs Bunny is and what he did for animation, as well as about the men who overlorded his 23-year career. The forties frenzy of Clampett. The technical finesse of Freleng and McKimson. The live-action staging of Tashlin. The classic Jones reels of the fifties that show the bunny at his all-time best. The fact that his personality was the creative spark that kicked the Warner artists in the pants and singlehandedly pulled the Merrie Melodies and Looney Tunes out of the rubber-hose era and into a decade of increased sophistication in animation, setting the post-Disney standard for excellence in the process. Herewith, on the eve of his fiftieth birthday, a more aesthetic look at the wabbit.

Bugs transcended being a cartoon character; he was a star. (He is a star on Hollywood Boulevard, in fact.) He was known to hobnob with Bogey and Bacall; he was

loaned out to the main Warner's lot from time to time for special appearances in its live-action films; he regularly conquered box-office polls. Like Disney's Mickey Mouse, he is a corporate image, but unlike Mickey, Bugs still has that unique personality, that viability as a character, that can enable the new breed of Warner Bros. animators (led by Darrell Van Citters) to craft a new theatrical short. In 1990, yet.

I thank Bugs for making me less anti-social than I might have been. If there's one thing that he's taught me in my life, it's that you can solve any problem if you just use the power of thought — Joe Adamson postulates in his wonderful book *Bugs Bunny: Fifty Years and Only One Grey Hare* that this philosophy was most likely handed down from Joel Chandler Harris's tales of Uncle Remus. A Br'er Rabbit for the space age, Bugs is the grandmaster of thinking up devilry and playing psychological chess with his adversaries — even if they're brandishing six-shooters or hunting rifles — and he checkmates every time. Seldom did Bugs have to resort to roughhousing like the characters from the New York studios. Even in the forties, Bugs exuded California cool.

If more proof of Bugs's greatness is needed, I submit that he is the star of the highest-rated Saturday-morning cartoon show on any of the three major networks. No matter what robots or teen detectives or blue elves or other come-latelies the other networks throw in his path, the bunny prevails, despite the fact that his adventures were produced before his semi-retirement in 1963 and have unspooled hundreds of times since. The end result remains the same as it ever was: gales of laughter from a grateful nation. So here's to you, Bugs — or should that be *hare's* to you? — on your fiftieth birthday. Have a slice of carrot cake on me. You've oined it, Doc.

Dave Mackey

Perhaps the last expression anyone would expect to hear me use with respect to Bugs Bunny is "father figure." But why not? Through the combined forces of Chuck Jones, Friz Freleng, Mel Blanc, and the irascible rabbit's force of personality, Bugs is just as responsible for shaping my character and my aspirations in life as my biologi-

cal father (who some suspect could only have come from a cartoon, but I digress).

Bugs was right there when my burgeoning imagination struggled to express itself. Bugs, along with Snoopy, Andy Capp, and Batman fostered within me a love for comic book and cartoon art. Five years after my first exposure to these characters, I started to try my hand at comic art, which eventually led me to try my hand at animating.

At around the age of ten, my habit of constant wisecracking — which some say will either get me a job or beaten up — was formed, and I owe much of my sense of comic timing to Chuck Jones's Bugs; he could be up to his not-inconsiderable ears in trouble, and still pull off a witty comment or a groan-inducing pun. Learning the principles of squash and stretch, walks, and what would have otherwise been boring animation technicalities was pure joy with Bugs's boundless energy. Combined with Mel Blanc's Brooklyn/Bronx accent, Bugs had that enviable savvy, that streetwise air that kept him on top of any situation.

Speaking of that master of a thousand voices, Blanc and Bugs taught me more about vocal manipulation than anybody else. I think it was *Hare-Way to the Stars* that had me first trying to imitate anybody — I eventually refined my impression of Marvin Martian to near-perfection, and that is still my most accurate imitation. In the process of trying to perfect my renditions of Bugs, Marvin, Yosemite Sam (which I never quite achieved), the Tasmanian Devil (such as it is), and other characters — I eventually moved on to attempting non-Warner characters, but that was much later — I learned the subtleties of the human voice, and of people's distinctive speech patterns. In later years, I would put this to use in my attempts to write believable dialogue.

Above all, Bugs taught me a crucial fact of life: lighten up! There's nothing the world, including yourself, that you can't laugh at. When the forces of the outside world threaten to do you in, don't back down, and retaliate decisively — but don't forget to have some fun while you're doing it. Kiss your favorite gun-toting antagonist today.

Happy birthday, Bugs; I hope you can teach my kids the same things you taught me.

Emru Townsend



Back to the Rabbit Hole:

Koth and Keller, the Men Behind the
New and Improved Bugs Bunny Comic Strip

By John Cawley

The Bugs Bunny comic strip has gone back to basics. The rabbit has been appearing in newspapers for nearly five decades, but for most of its existence the strip has featured the characters in a situation-comedy world. Bugs and friends lived in houses or condos, had jobs, went dating, and acquired relatives (the ever-popular nephews and nieces). Kathleen Helppie, Vice President of Warner Bros. Classic Animation, felt that Bugs's fiftieth was the perfect time to bring the comic strip more in line with the classic Bugs cartoons of the 1940s and 1950s. Under the guidance of Darrell Van Citters, Creative Director at Warner's, the strip has begun to focus on the cartoon life of these characters. Now Bugs is back living in his rabbit hole; Daffy is trying to figure out ways to best Bugs (or make a buck); and Elmer is, once again, hunting "wabbits."

The new team working on this upgraded comic strip is Brett Koth (main writer) and Shawn Keller (penciller). Koth and Keller both have strong backgrounds in animation, including work at the Disney, Bluth, and Warner Bros. studios. Koth also has strip experience, having worked with Jim Davis (*Garfield* and *US Acres*).

To better write about the men behind the new Bugs Bunny strip, I went and interviewed them both. This was no small task, since Koth works from his home, almost two hours outside of Los Angeles. He faxes his writing (which is in the form of rough comic strips) to Warner's, where it is reviewed.

The approved strips are then passed on to Keller, who pencils them out.

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Brett Koth is a graduate of Cal Arts. He has worked in animation for the Walt Disney and Don Bluth studios, and later worked for Jim Davis as a storyboard artist for his television specials and on the then-new *US Acres* comic strip. After returning to California, he worked at Film Roman, the studio that animates *Garfield* for TV, and continued to work with Davis on *US Acres* (via fax

One of Brett Koth's gag roughs.



machine and mail), handling the drawing chores and collaborating on the writing; soon, he received a shared credit on the strip. The *U.S. Acres* strip was discontinued in April of 1989. Koth continues to work with Davis on the *Garfield* strip as an editorial and layout assistant.

JOHN CAWLEY: How do you go about writing for *Bugs Bunny*?

BRETT KOTH: Gee, let me think. For me, the easiest way to write is to take two characters, put them in any given situation, and let the personalities do the work for you. That's why writing for the Warner's characters is such fun. They have such strong, distinctive personalities.

The other thing is to try for a lot of visual humor; keep the dialogue down to a minimum if possible. This is mainly because of the size the strips have to be printed. I also think that comics should be funny pictures.

Since the strip is titled *Bugs Bunny*, you obviously have to feature him. But which character do you most enjoy writing for?

Daffy's always been my favorite character, I have to confess. Bugs is fun to write for when you have a good antagonist, but by himself there isn't much to grab onto. If you give him a good heavy, a good antagonist, then he really shines. That's when you can have the most fun with him, since he can be mean...but he has to have a reason for being mean. He's not aggressive unless provoked.

Lately, I've been writing a lot of Sylvester. He's fun. I'd like to get Porky more involved. He's tough, though, because he's more of a straight man. He also needs someone good to work with. In fact, many of the Warner's characters don't really work well alone.

Which characters are difficult to write for?

The Road Runner stuff is difficult, because

it's all pantomime, for that reason alone. The characters are fun to draw, but it's hard to come up with a pantomime gag that hasn't already been done in one of the shorts.

Characters that are a threat because of some form of firearm they carry pose a particular problem. They [the syndicate] don't allow us to do that in the strip; we can't show a gun in any way, even if it's not pointed

at somebody. That's why Elmer in the strip is a real challenge. You have to make a very unthreatening character threatening. Elmer is a real mental lightweight. The only thing that makes Elmer a threat is his gun. The same is true with Yosemite Sam, although Sam's volatile temper is big enough to put the character across.

Are there characters you'd like to bring into the strip?

I'd like to bring in more of the incidental characters that appeared over the years. I've been toying with bringing [Chuck Jones's] The Three Bears back. I would really like to do something with them, but it hasn't occurred to me yet...but it will, at some point. I like the gangster characters that were used, like Rocky, the little gangster with the big hat. But again, he's a gangster and needs to carry a firearm to be threatening. If there's any way to get around that, I'd love to bring him back.

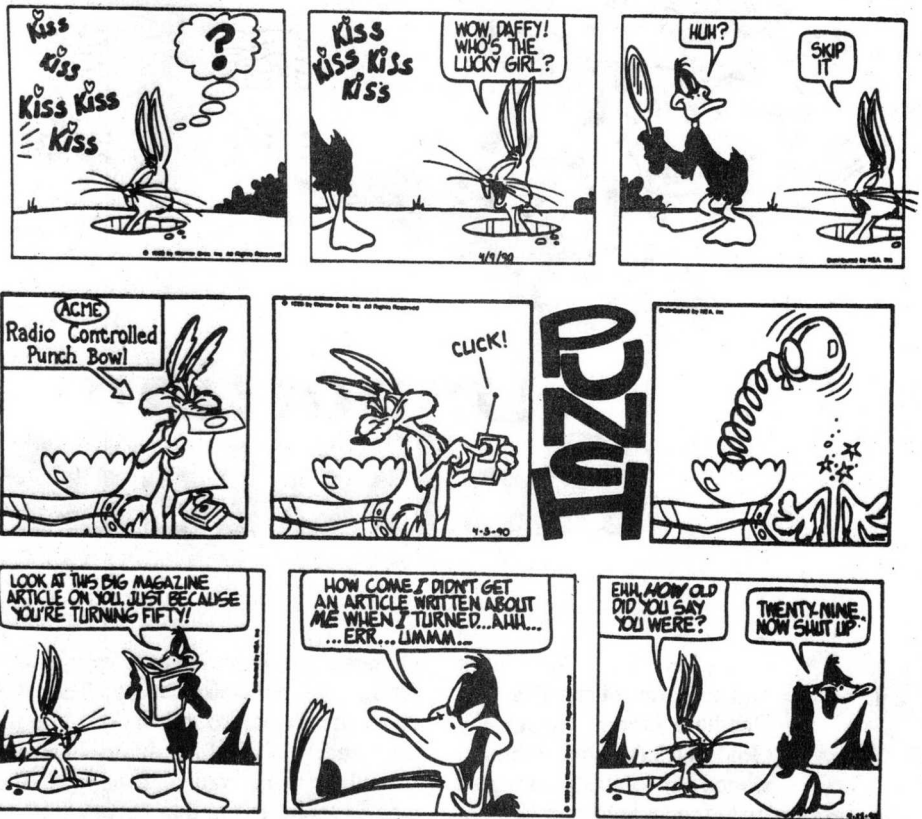
Shawn Keller has over ten years of animation experience, having worked at the Disney studio on such features as *The Fox and the Hound*, *The Great Mouse Detective*, and the recent blockbuster *The Little Mermaid*. A self-trained artist, Keller got his job at Disney directly out of high school. Once at Disney, Keller was trained in animation by members of Disney's "Nine Old Men," including Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston. At Disney, Keller was known for his ability to capture subtle gestures and emotions. Where other animators excelled at the freewheeling, bouncing, and squashing, Keller's animation was more attuned to the understated and reserved movement.

JOHN CAWLEY: *Was it difficult switching from animation to comic strips?*

SHAWN KELLER: Not really. For one thing, Warner's desired the strip to look more animated, by using animation poses, so I'm still doing about the same kind of drawing. It's just a little easier. In animation, you have to do thirty, forty, sometimes fifty drawings a day. And at Disney, most of those will get thrown out by the new directors, whether they work or not. Drawing a strip means drawing only a few drawings a day.

Do you find yourself with a lot of free time?

Oh, no. Along with the strip, I handle a lot of publicity art and merchandising art. Whatever they need, they bring to me. I've



Recent examples of the revamped Bugs Bunny comic strip. All illustrations accompanying this article are copyright © 1990 Warner Bros. Inc.; distributed by NEA.

done video boxes, posters, covers, publicity items; all sorts of things.

Which characters do you like drawing?

Probably Bugs and Wile E. Coyote are my favorites. They are really appealing character designs. They're the type of characters you'd like to meet. That's what the old timers at the Disney studio used to tell me: you know that you've developed a successful character if it's someone the audience would like to meet. Bugs and Wile E. also pose easily.

Are any characters tough to draw?

It always takes me some time to warm up to a new character, one that I haven't drawn before. A good drawing must not just look like the character, it must stand and move like the character.

Porky and Tweety are tough to handle. Their heads are so big, and shaped so strangely. They aren't easily broken down into round shapes. It just takes a bit more time to think them through.

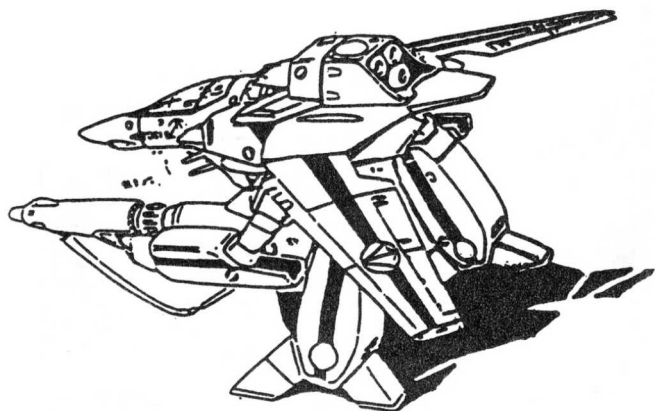
How do the Warner characters compare to the Disney characters?

I'm only familiar with the Disney feature characters, though I did work with Donald in Mickey's Christmas Carol. I really enjoy some Disney characters. *The Jungle Book* and *Song of the South* are full of good character designs. The animals in *Sleeping Beauty* are quite appealing. I even enjoy the Milt Kahl Robin Hood designs. These are all similar to the better Warner's, like Bugs and Wile E.

Some of the newer Disney characters, I'm less fond of. For example, the designs in *Oliver & Company* can just be tossed. Actually, what I like best about the Warner's characters is that they are almost all animals, or animal-like. I'm not really fond of human characters. It's too bad that most of the upcoming Disney features are emphasizing these over fun animal designs.

Now that you've broken away from animation, are there other avenues you'd like to explore?

Well, I'd be interested in maybe trying children's books or comic books. I also think at some point I'll get back into animation. Though animation is a lot more work, it's fun when you can work on a fun, well-designed character.



A Look Back at Robotech With Carl Macek

By Bob Miller

Importing Robotechnology

One day in 1985, Carl Macek had to confront the Dreaded Deadline Doom. Harmony Gold, U.S.A. had commissioned him to Westernize three Japanese-animated series and compile them into one cohesive story: *Robotech*. Before the show premiered, however, Macek discovered he had to produce a 90-minute special that would kick off the series.

He had four days to do it. KCOP, an independent station in Los Angeles, had scheduled *Codename: Robotech* on a Friday evening.

"We went into the studio on Monday to edit together all the relevant scenes to our point of view," Macek said. "Then on Tuesday, we brought in the actor that played Captain Gloval, Greg Finlay, and he gave an entire narration in a day. And then Wednesday we remixed it. Thursday we mastered it and delivered it to KCOP, which they showed on Friday."

To celebrate the premiere, Harmony Gold scheduled an office party for that evening. The excitement mounted as everyone waited for *Robotech* to be broadcast for the first time.

Macek recounted what happened next: "The movie was broadcast, and the first fifteen seconds everybody at Harmony Gold was screaming when they saw the name 'Harmony Gold' up there, and the name of Agrama, who owned the company. About three minutes into the program, there was total silence. Then about five minutes into the program, there was a sense of, 'I don't understand this,' and about ten minutes into the program they

changed the channel and everybody at Harmony Gold walked away. They didn't understand what *Robotech* was. I sat there confused. I had thought we had done something very, very interesting. And it was apparent to me that no one in the organization was aware of what *Robotech* was or what it meant. They had no idea it was a whole complex, unique science-fiction story for television.

"I remember talking to the owner of Harmony Gold at that party, and I said, 'You know, this may sound pretentious, but, I will bet you that five years from today, that there will be groups of people sitting around discussing what *Robotech* is all about.'"

To which the response was: "Bovine excrement" (or words to that effect). But Macek's prediction came true.

On March 17th of this year, some forty fans from the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization in Los Angeles celebrated the fifth anniversary of *Robotech*. The series had been a success in TV syndication, playing in up to 119 markets. Every episode had been adapted in comic books and novels, and new adventures continue to be published. Harmony Gold profited from sales in videocassettes, CD records, role-playing games, models, and toys, which boosted their staff from six to over sixty workers by 1987.

The C/FO invited Carl Macek to their salute to *Robotech*, and he took the opportunity to discuss the series, respond to criticisms, clear up misconceptions, and talk about his current projects.

"When we made *Robotech*, we tried to emphasize the fact that we were building something that was interesting, that had

value, that would relate to a large audience," Macek said. "We were way ahead of the game in terms of what the American audience was ready for."

"But because *Robotech* was serialized in 85 episodes, it was very hard to sell to a large number of stations. Watching *Robotech* was an investment; you had to watch it on a daily basis or else you would lose track of what was going on. *He-Man* — no investment. You could watch one episode and it would basically be the same as any other episode. There was a commitment on the part of the audience to watch *Robotech*, which really made it unique."

What also made *Robotech* unique was that it rarely condescended to its audience. The series touched upon adult-related topics such as incest, racism, marriage, the loss of loved ones, adultery, and genocide. Because *Robotech* depicted war, people actually got hurt, even killed — unlike other "robot" shows like *Transformers* and *GoBots*. *Robotech*'s characters were portrayed as real human beings, with first-rate vocal performances by the cast, strong storytelling by the writers, and an outstanding soundtrack. That plus the show's emphasis on characterization pushed *Robotech* ahead of the competition.

The story began with the crash-landing of an alien battleship, the SDF-1, in the year 1999. Scientists process the ship's "robotechnology," and use it to defend the Earth against a race of giants, the Zentraedi. The resulting war involves Rick Hunter, an insecure pilot; his girlfriend Lynn Minmei, whose air-headedness is offset by her remarkable singing ability; and Rick's com-



All illustrations from Robotech model sheets.

mander Lisa Hayes, whom he later marries. The conflict becomes more complex as it continues for three generations, with several alien races fighting for a mysterious power source known as protoculture.

Robotech derived its stories from 36 episodes of *Super Dimension Fortress Macross*, plus an episode called "Dana's Story" that linked it to 23 episodes from *Super Dimension Cavalry Southern Cross*, followed by 25 episodes of *Genesis Climber Mospeada*.

According to Macek, a lot of people criticized *Robotech* for not being faithful to the original stories.

"My only explanation is that — had we made them authentic, had we made *Macross* or *Southern Cross* or *Mospeada* as separate individual episodes, they would never have been shown on television because the marketing people at Harmony Gold, several sublicensed toy companies, and everybody else involved would not have been able to understand or get behind it. They needed the crutch of a single storyline. Because of that, we had to alter the character names, and the internal philosophy about what was going on.

"But, I do believe that however altered *Robotech* was in terms of the surface plot, the soul of the characters were as authentic to the original Japanese point of view as could have been made at that time, given the criteria of American broadcast television. I understand everybody's criticisms, but I also feel that, in order to accomplish something, one also has to recognize change is inevitable."

Macek revealed that the Japanese did

understand his concept of incorporating their shows into the *Robotech* saga, and in fact, approved of it. To prove it, he referred to a letter written by the chief production staff at Tatsunoko Studios in 1985, at the time they were discussing production of *The Sentinels*, the sequel to *Robotech*:

"The great epic *Robotech* is a masterful reconstruction of stories from *Macross*, *Southern Cross*, and *Mospeada*. But this new series, *The Sentinels: The Robotech Saga* will be expanded by an additional 65 episodes.

We are devoting all of our efforts to the successful production of this new *Sentinels* project, in the development of background, characters, and mechanical settings which should ensure the smooth interlocking of the three stories. As we proceed, we are being particularly careful not to forget these important points.

1. While constructing the smooth connection between the *Macross*, *Southern Cross* and *Mospeada* storylines, with which is interdependent, emphasis must be given to fully developing the points of interest in the *Sentinels* storylines.

2. The new *Sentinels* must not merely be used as a vehicle for the uniting of the *Robotech* series. We currently believe that its originality must be emphasized, in much the same way as the three stories to which the *Sentinels* is based is emphasized. Towards this goal, we are using familiar characters and mecha-

nisms from the three earlier works while creating new characters and mechanisms with which we can construct a new story with fresh points of attraction.

The Sentinels has its own attractions that should help the *Robotech* series become the biggest animated series ever.

Mr. Macek's ideas on character positioning and setting prove extremely instructive, in helping us piece together a *Robotech* series. We believe we can put these ideas to good use. We would like to expand the details in Macek's outline, and spread them over four or five episodes.

We have great confidence in his story idea and hope you will understand our arrangement of it, as we desire to complete *The Sentinels* in its final form."

"The Japanese understood what happened with *Robotech*," Macek related. "They were willing to take part in the *Sentinels* project, not as a studio-for-hire but as a creator of importance. Lots of people kept saying that they never really liked what we did and that we were butchering their work, and if the Japanese got their hands on us they'd 'kill' us. A letter like this shows you that was not the case."

The Japanese had planned the original *Southern Cross* to last 39 episodes, but the show was cancelled after 23 episodes. However, artwork for the unfilmed episodes #24 through #39 had been done, and the initial plan was to recycle this art for *The Sentinels*. This material included robotic lions and horses — which bothered fans, who wrongly blamed Macek for what were originally Japanese concepts.

For *The Sentinels*, Macek wrote plot points and "overblown outlines," which depicted how the relationships between the characters developed. These were handed out to ten writers who would add the dialogue. Macek chose people "who had no preconceptions about traditional animated storytelling." They were actually novelists who specialized in "cyberpunk" science fiction, and they included John Shirley, Arthur Byron Cover, Steve Barnes, and Richard Mueller. Duane Capizzi, a popular Saturday morning writer with *ALF Tales* and *Gummi Bears* to his credit, got his start by writing for *The Sentinels*.

Robotech II: The Sentinels would be 65 all-new stories, with all-new animation, not only continuing the adventures of the characters from *Macross*, but eventually connecting the events between *Macross*, *South-*

ern Cross (renamed "Robotech Masters") and Mospeada (renamed "The New Generation"). Each week, the story would be presented in five parts, with a new adventure starting the following Monday.

While Macek was planning *The Sentinels*, he was also preparing a Robotech movie. Originally, the story was to occur just after the third TV episode, "Space Fold," when the SDF-1 and Macross Island abruptly vanish from Earth. The Government attempts a cover-up by saying the 70,000 inhabitants perished in an explosion. A group of youngsters investigate what really happened, and learn the Government is using Robotechnology for military purposes, and is keeping the existence of the Zentraedi a secret from the public. Most of the footage

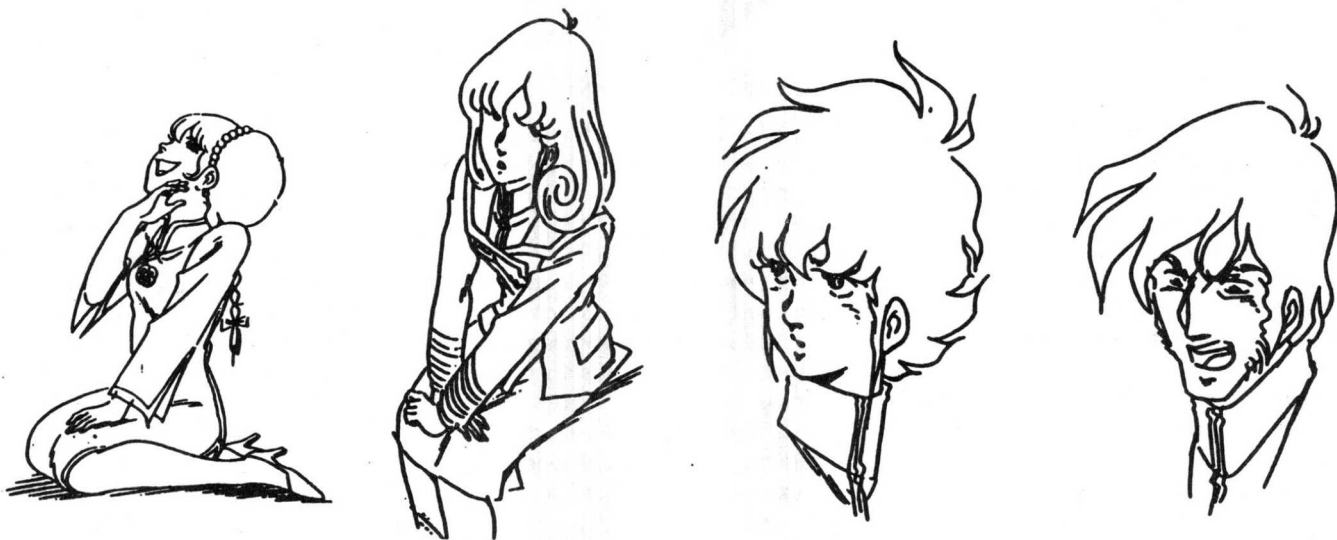
most excessive use of 'Robotechism' that you could possibly imagine. Every grunt, every groan, every wheeze, every eyeblink — [everything] was accompanied by a grunt or a noise, some noxious sound. The guy that put it together was so convinced that because this was going to be a gigantic picture on the big screen, that audiences would feel slighted if every physical move was not accompanied by a grunt.

"Beyond that, they didn't have the ending on the film the way it was, because Artland Company, the animation studio that produced this, agreed with me there should be a new ending on *Megazone 23 Part I* to show to theaters because it didn't work as a theatrical piece. So I prepared a storyboard for the way I felt it should end. And they

that Robotech stuff was done in 16mm; *Megazone 23* is 35mm; it's going to look crappy when it's blown up. [They said] 'Don't worry, just do it; just do it; just do it.'

"So I did it. I edited together a new version of the Robotech movie in about six hours. I went into a meeting the next day. I played the film silent, and I acted out all the parts for about eighty minutes, and when it was over the lights came on and Menacham Golan said, 'Now that's a Cannon movie!'

However, Macek pointed out, "the physical production of it, taking what footage as it existed and turning it into English and doing six-track Dolby with it, was great. [To] the viewing public, the people who nothing about Japanese animation, [it] was satisfactory.



would come from the Japanese original video feature *Megazone 23 Part I*.

Macek described making *Robotech: The Movie* as "the worst experience of my professional career. I did *Megazone 23 Part I* fairly much intact from my point of view as a story. I went to Japan with Ahmed Agrama to set up the production of *The Sentinels* and I left the physical production of the script in the hands of trusted staff members. I was gone for about a month. I came back during the Thanksgiving of 1985 to okay the remix of the film to make it available for a Christmas 1985 release from Cannon, and I sat there in stunned amazement because what we saw was a really bad post-production job on this really cool movie.

"The end result of this first version was the

were producing the animation when I returned from Japan.

"What I didn't realize was that Harmony Gold previewed this version of the Robotech movie to the executives at Cannon Films and they freaked out. They didn't understand it; they didn't like it. There was too much talking. So they said, 'Cut this scene out and cut this scene out; they've got these girls; there's too many girls; get rid of this; get rid of that.'

"I was told I had 24 hours to make a new movie. So I said, 'Okay, what do you want?' And the Cannon people said, 'We want lots of guns, lots of shooting, lots of robots.' So I went back and took the most recent footage from Robotech that was available to me at the time, which was *Southern Cross*, and we edited the *Southern Cross* footage into *Megazone 23 Part I*. Against my better judgement, I did the unthinkable. But everyone said it would be great. I said, 'Look fellas, *Macross* and all

"But — if you knew anything at all about *Macross* and if you knew anything at all about Japanese animation, it was a joke. I didn't want to do it, but I did it. 'Cause when you work for a company, you do what is requested. I was actually glad that it never got a broad release because it was, to me, an abomination. I never look at that, though I still have it on tape."

Cannon released *Robotech: The Movie — The Untold Story* July 25, 1986, to 35 theaters in north Texas on a limited engagement. The eighty-minute feature was rated PG, and it boasted a budget of some \$8 million. The orchestral score was by Ulpio Minucci and Arlen Ober, with additional music by Three Dog Night, Joanne Harris, Michael Bradley, and Gigi Agrama.

With the incorporation of the *Southern Cross* footage, *Robotech: The Movie* takes place after Rick Hunter leaves for the home planet of Robotechnology, Tirol. Alien technovoyagers called the Robotech Mas-

ters arrive on Earth, seeking the data contained within the SDF-1. The Government tries to keep the public from finding out, but that's absurd. With aliens blasting cities, how can it be a secret? It's easier to hide the fact of people disappearing from an isolated Pacific island, which was the original premise.

The movie violated continuity with the TV series, but that was the least of its problems. An overly-complicated story and choppy editing marred what otherwise was an intriguing adventure. As Macek pointed out to his bosses, the print quality was uneven, with the *Southern Cross* scenes being fuzzy and the *Megazone 23* scenes being razor-sharp. However, the movie did have some redeeming values: its music, vocal perform-

looked like the movie was called "Robotech Masters" starring Dana Sterling (who was never in the movie). In the Sunday paper, the ad changed the title to "Robotech Masters of the Universe." (Wait'll He-Man find out about that!)

The following July, the movie played to a sell-out crowd during the Second Los Angeles International Animation Celebration at the Nuart Theater. It was released as a videocassette overseas, but not in the U.S.

Meanwhile, Harmony Gold sent *Sentinels* scripts and storyboards to Tatsunoko Studios in Japan for animation. But the dollar weakened against the Japanese yen, which caused production costs to skyrocket. In addition, Matchbox withdrew financial support for the show. The budget collapsed,

to Rick, the Masters are enroute to Earth, while Tirol is besieged by hordes of alien Invid. The highlights of the video are an exciting simulated air battle, the Invid invasion of Tirol's capital city, and a special song sung by Lynn Minmei and her partner, Janice Em, as Rick and Lisa finally tie the knot.

Robotech II: The Sentinels introduced new characters, music, and "mecha," but its story was left open-ended. Fortunately for *Robotech* fans, the saga could and did continue in other media.

Ballantine/Del Rey published a series of *Robotech* novels, written by two authors under the pseudonym "Jack McKinney": six from the *Macross* saga, three from *Southern Cross*, three from *New Generation*, five from *The Sentinels*, and a final volume, *The End of the Circle*.

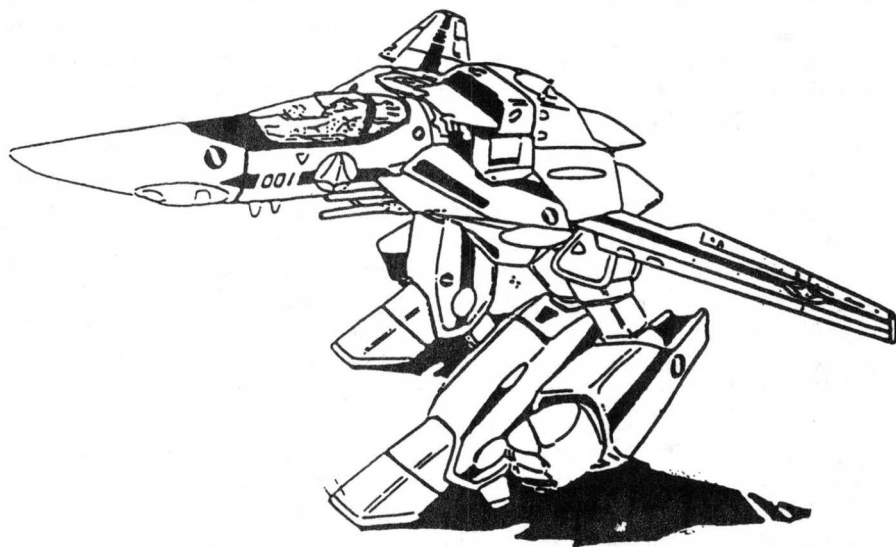
"When the books were conceived, they had already written certain things in the first *Robotech* book which they were compelled to bring into *The Sentinels*," Macek said. "So they eliminated certain elements of the plot that I had. They added things; they changed personalities, to the point that the essence of the story was the same, but the subtlety and the dramatic rhythm that I had created were different."

In 1989, Harmony Gold licensed Eternity Comics to adapt *Robotech II: The Sentinels*, based on Carl Macek's plots. The black-and-white comics continue to be published, recently introducing the alien Sentinels. Two issues of *Robotech II: The Sentinels Wedding Special* celebrated the marriage of Rick Hunter and Lisa Hayes. A twelve-part miniseries, *Robotech II: The Malcontent Uprisings*, dealt with a Zentradi revolt shortly after events in *Macross*.

Regarding the comic book version of his story, Macek said, "The comics are adapting the scripts fairly authentically, and I also think they're taking elements from the books as well. So it's kind of a hybrid."

"I have no criticisms of that. I know that had *The Sentinels* been made, the novels would be different, because there were so many strong images in the story points that I wanted to express in the animation that were taken out. What I wanted is not really what's there. The authors talked to me about it, and I told them what my ideas were and they had to interface [my] ideas to their books."

"To me it's very successful; to me it's amazing that they're able to sell as many copies of those books, and for all practical purposes, their version is the version. That's it. That's the way I look at it, and I don't see it any other way."



ances, and realistic sound effects. In places where there was no dialogue, the characters didn't gasp or go "oh" every time their mouth was open — a significant improvement over the TV show.

Robotech: The Movie didn't pass the test at the box office, lasting only three weeks in north Texas theaters. Of the three major area papers, only the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reviewed it, its critic rating it 7 out of 10 stars. Theaters limited show times to afternoon matinees, so there was no way *Robotech* could attract an adult audience except over the weekend.

The *Sherman (Texas) Democrat* received no publicity materials. All they knew about *Robotech* was it was "a science fiction adventure movie with music by Three Dog Night." The only local advertising Cannon provided was a one-sheet poster and a *Robotech Masters* comic book, issue #8. The ad in the Friday *Sherman Democrat* (July 25) used the comic's masthead, so it

but some footage had been completed, and Harmony Gold decided to use it for a home video release.

"When people talk about *The Sentinels*, they say this is a compilation of the first three episodes of the series, and in reality it isn't," Macek said.

"What happened was, I did to my own stuff what I did to *Robotech* footage. I was given an opportunity by Harmony Gold to salvage the footage shot for *Sentinels* and turn it into a feature. There wasn't quite enough footage in the storytelling. So I completely cut apart the footage of various episodes and selected into the arrangement that appears in *The Sentinels* videotape."

To pad out the story, scenes from *Macross* and *Mospeada* were mixed in with the new footage. The 90-minute video shows Rick Hunter and his crew preparing to leave Earth in a new starship, the SDF-3. Their mission: to challenge the Robotech Masters at their own homeworld of Tirol. Unknown

Will *Robotech II: The Sentinels* ever be completed for television?

"Never," Macek states. "You will never, ever ever in your life see any more animation of *Robotech*. The only thing you can see that's already been done is that *Mospeada* rock video [*Love, Live, Alive*; there is also a *Macross* music video. Neither has been translated into English]. And that's about it. You will never see anything else based on *Robotech*, because Harmony Gold has no interest in reinvesting time or money into a project that they think has no value. There are people at Harmony Gold administering the licensing that don't even know what *Robotech* is. Some fan called up and said, 'Hey, what's happening with Rick Hunter?' They said, 'Well, he doesn't work here any more.'"

"You know what I mean? They don't care. So I would say that *Robotech* lives on in the books, the comics, the role-playing games, and on videotape and that's where it's at. You know, if you have your own imagination and your own stories you want to tell, by all means, do it."

So, what else is available on *Robotech* and its related shows? Comico the Comic Company published the first three series — *Robotech: The Macross Saga* (36 issues); *Robotech Masters* (23 issues); *Robotech: The New Generation* (25 issues). *Robotech Special* adapted "Dana's Story." *Robotech in 3-D* retold the beginning of the *Macross* saga. The 48-page *Robotech Graphic Novel* revealed the events that led to the SDF-1 being sent to Earth by Zor, the purveyor of protoclulture.

Starblaze Publications released a trio of *Robotech* art books. *Robotech Art I*, by Kay Reynolds and Ardith Carlton, contained color art reproductions. They discussed the saga in detail, with summaries for the 85 episodes and cast credits. *Robotech Art II* showcased fan art by Colleen Doran, Trina Robbins, Dave Garcia, and others. Carl Macek wrote *Robotech Art III: The Sentinels*, in which he revealed his plans for *The Sentinels* and explained the demise of the series.

Family Home Entertainment released the first three episodes of *Robotech* on home videocassette; then, the 36-episode *Macross* saga in a six-volume set. Each tape contained six episodes — which meant that the story had to be trimmed down to fit the tape's 100-minute length.

Originally the company wanted to release a twelve-volume set because there were



standard boxes made for twelve volumes. With twelve 100-minute tapes, that would have been twenty hours in length.

"They were going to put out 20 hours of *Robotech*, and they thought that's more than any human being will be able to stand," Macek said. "What they wanted to do was cut out the redundancy and the bumpers and the recaps and the 'next episode' [previews]. Then they wanted to cut out stuff which they felt did not advance the plot.

"It was their choice. Harmony Gold got a good deal on the licensing of the videotape. And the people at the video company realized that if anybody was going to edit it, that I would know what scenes to take out, or arrange it so it wouldn't be noticeable. But Harmony Gold refused to have that happen. The Harmony Gold executive said no way, they're not going to get him to work for them; he works for us. I was like some dog on a leash, exclusively under contract. I couldn't work for anybody else. They thought that I was some ignorant guy that was so star-struck that I wanted to work with this one company for the rest of my life and had thoughts outside of those benefitting Harmony Gold."

In addition to the six-volume *Macross* set, Family Home Entertainment had planned to release *Southern Cross* in three volumes, and *Mospeada* in three volumes, but these were never released.

Before *Robotech*, Harmony Gold had produced a *Macross* home video, a faithful translation of the first three episodes. The model kit company Revell, which was involved in an early licensing program with Harmony Gold, wanted some of the names changed to suggest anything but *Macross*. To wit: "Hikaru Ichijo" became "Rick Yamata" (which was changed to "Rick Hunter" when the cartoon became part of *Robotech*). The video is no longer available and thus is a collector's item.

In 1984, Toho International released a feature film, *Macross: Do You Remember*

Love?, a two-hour retelling of the TV series. An Australian recording firm dubbed it into English, poorly translated it, chopped out about twenty minutes of the story, and basically ruined it. It's available on video from Celebrity Home Video as *Macross: Clash of the Bionoids*. However, English-subtitled copies of the original do circulate among Japanimation fans. There are no plans for a theatrical release here in the States.

Megazone 23 continues as a series of original home videos in Japan, with *Part II: Tell Me the Secret*; *Part III*, Volume 1: *Eve's Awakening* and *Part III*, Volume 2: *Emancipation Day*, released by Victor Video.

As for *Robotech*, Carl Macek believes that it will return to syndication, probably in 1992, to entertain a new generation of viewers.

Macek envisioned a third series after *The Sentinels*, called *Robotech III: The Odyssey*. He revealed what it was to the C/FO audience:

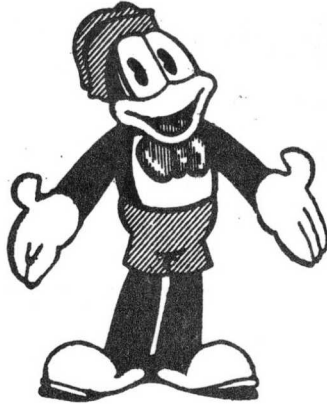
"Since it was a serial, I wanted to do something that had never been done before. I wanted to have 260 episodes of the show, with one show a day every day for a year. It would have been Monday through Friday for 52 weeks.

"I wanted the story to function like a Moebius strip, where the beginning becomes the end. There is no beginning; it's all one big story. So no matter where you started, when you watched it for a year, you would see the whole story and it would make sense to you. That's what I tried to do with *The Odyssey*. I envisioned it as a Moebius strip of storytelling, where ultimately, Episode One is the SDF-1 crashing into the Earth and Episode 260 is the SDF-1 crashing into the Earth, but with the story that led up to that. That's what it really was."

"I also had in the back of my mind an evil joke in which I wanted to have Minmei become the mother of Robotechnology."

The audience laughed, and someone said, "That would explain a great deal."

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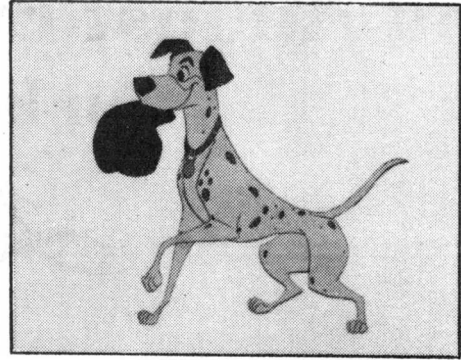


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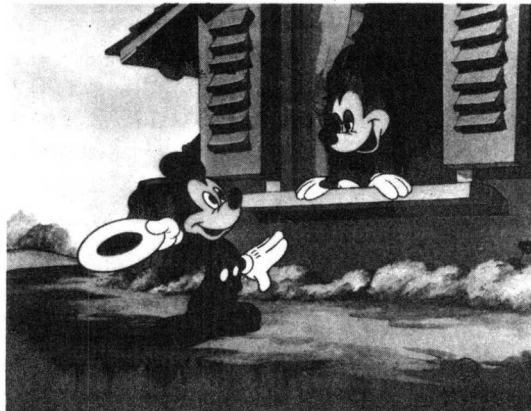
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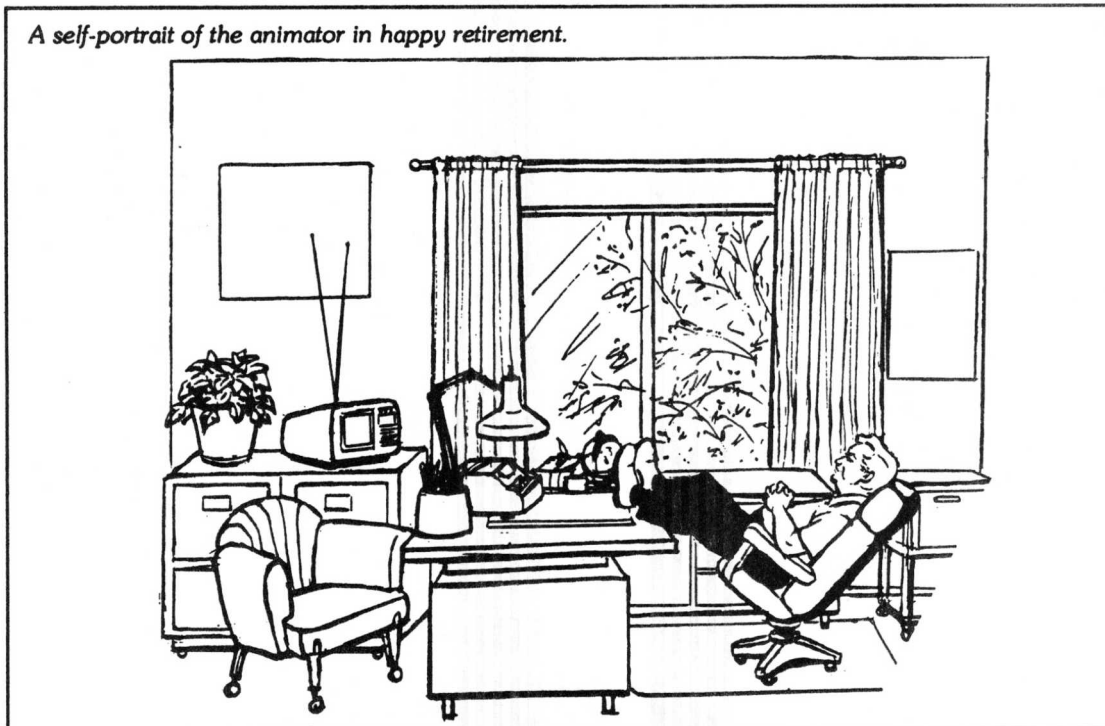
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From Snow White to Disney World (And Almost Everything Inbetween):

An Interview With

Bill Justice

A self-portrait of the animator in happy retirement.



By John Province
Illustrations by Bill Justice

Bill Justice joined the Walt Disney Studios as an animator in 1937. His career lasted four decades, five Oscar nominations, nineteen full-length features, and 57 short subjects; his talents also enhanced many of the rides and attractions at Disneyland, Disney World, and Tokyo Disneyland which are enjoyed by thousands each day. I interviewed Bill Justice in November of 1989,

Bill Justice is currently at work on his autobiography, to be published in 1991 by Tomart Publications. With the exception of the portrait of Chip 'n' Dale, the illustrations accompanying this interview are drawn from that work, and are copyright © 1990 Bill Justice.

and was very pleased to be able to spend a pleasant afternoon with this most versatile and creative individual. Bill and his wife Marie live in Burbank, California, amidst room after room of mementos of his career and, appropriately enough, within strolling distance of the studio where he invested so many productive years.

John Province

JOHN PROVINCE: Could we begin by talking about your art schooling?

BILL JUSTICE: I originally wanted to be a portrait painter, and attended Arsenal Technical High School in Indianapolis. There were about 6500 students and about

thirty art classes to choose from, so I took three or four a day! I then won a scholarship from the John Herron Art School, and it was like a review of everything I'd learned.

Had you been a fan of Disney cartoons prior to applying for a job at the studio?

What really sold me on them was when the Disney organization released what they called "An Academy Award Revue." This was a collection of all the films that had won Oscars: *The Old Mill*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Pluto's Judgement Day*, *The Country Cousin*, and *Flowers and Trees*. When I went to see that in the Lyric Theatre in Indianapolis, I thought to myself, "Boy,

would I love to be a part of that, to be able to draw all of those great characters!"

I was about a year out of art and working part-time for a commercial advertising firm when I answered an ad by the studio in *Esquire*. When I told some of the artists I worked with that I'd sent some samples to Walt Disney, they said, "Oh Bill, you'll never hear from them!" The very next day I received a telegram inviting me to come to Hollywood for a tryout. There were thirty of us in my group. At the end of a month there were only twelve. At the end of two years I was the only one left from the bunch.

It sounds like it was pretty grueling.

We started at 8:00 am and worked until 5:00. Then we'd come back at 6:00 for training classes and work until 9:00; then a half-day on Saturday. Some of them couldn't take the criticism. Some were there to make a name for themselves. We were all just inbetweening, learning the basics of animation. I loved it.

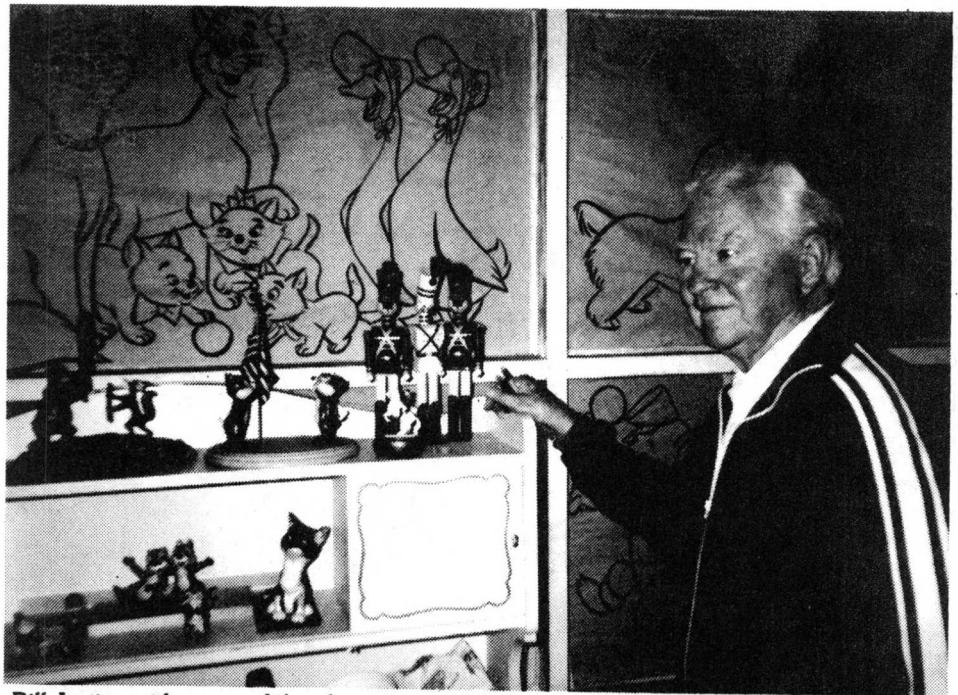
Did you get to do any work on Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs?

Just on the tail end of it during the last three months of production. The very first thing I ever worked on was a scene of the wicked queen talking to herself in the mirror. About the only thing that moved her her lips, and they were so close together that I had to use a 6/8th pencil, like a needle. You had to keep it real sharp, and it was very tedious. I also got to work on some of the dwarfs, and those were the sort of thing I loved.

Who was the animator that you trained under?

Woolie [Wolfgang Reitherman]. When I first started with Woolie he was working on the Goofy shorts. He did great Goofy stuff, like *Hawaiian Holiday*. Lots of funny material.

I learned nearly everything I know from Woolie Reitherman. He was a wonderful animator and did great action stuff. But on my job on *Pinocchio*, Woolie's crickets were about eight heads high. You'd practically have to start all over again to get the same poses he'd had, then get them in the right proportions, which was tough because his stuff was real loose and rough. He'd never let you use a clean sheet of paper, which meant that you had to [imitates erasing]. He'd work in blue pencil, then red pencil, then black pencil on top of that. You'd have to scrub that thing down just to see what it



Bill Justice with some of the character models he has created; the toy soldiers were used in Babes in Toyland. The sketches in the background are master drawings he created for a mural at Disney World.

was, and then redraw it in the proper proportions.

After I'd finished with Woolie's scenes, they asked me to clean up some of Milt Kahl's animation. I was afraid to touch any of it because it was so beautifully drawn. All I really did was connect the lines. I thought to myself, "Boy, when I get to animate I'm going to try and do it just like this!" It was an inspiration just to get to work on Milt's stuff, because it was just beautiful.

What was the very first piece of film you ever animated?

It was in *Pinocchio*, where Jiminy Cricket is floating down past the whale's eye with his umbrella. I also did the scene where he's floating in a bottle in the water after the whale had destroyed the raft.

Besides Woolie Reitherman and Milt Kahl, who else did you admire at the studio?

Freddy Moore. Freddy was my idol. I think what really made the difference for Walt Disney was Freddy Moore. When they first worked on the Three Little Pigs, they really weren't too attractive. When Freddy got ahold of them, they turned out to be really cute little pigs. Same thing with the dwarfs in *Snow White*.

I've seen early character models of the dwarfs. They look like Arthur Rackham

characters.

Yes, creepy little men. Freddy had a talent of making everything look so cute.

He also did a revamping of Mickey himself, didn't he?

For a long time Mickey just wore the pants with the two big buttons. When they began doing the more complicated stories, like *The Brave Little Tailor* and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, he had a different costume in every film from then on.

After Pinocchio you went right to work on Fantasia?

Woolie was on vacation when Ham Luske asked me to submit some drawings of cupids, centaurs, and unicorns. Cute things like that. I made a whole stack of drawings which they liked very much. They wanted me to start animating right then and there! But I said no, I'd rather wait until Woolie gets back to see if he thinks I'm ready. When he came back on Monday, he said, "Bill, I understand you have the opportunity to animate. I think that you're ready - go to it!" That gave me a lot of confidence. The scenes I did in *Fantasia* are long shots of the centaurettes, cupids, and unicorns who are followed by Bacchus.

Did you work on any of the government

Art class – Don Graham, instructor.



films during the war?

I worked on *Der Fuehrer's Face*, *Reason and Emotion*, and *The New Spirit*, where Donald is trying to get people to pay their taxes on time. I drew a lot of military insignias and illustrated little booklets and things for the government.

We did a lot of camp shows during the war. These would usually involve a lot of candy-stripers and [Ward] Kimball's band, which was then called the Huggajeebie Eight. I was billed as "The World's Fastest Sketch Artist." While the Huggajeebie Eight played their numbers, I would draw fifteen Disney characters about so high [approximately four feet]. They'd put on an old-time melodrama called "Curse You Jack Dalton!" with the villain with the mustache and cape. Real dumb stuff, but lots of laughs.

Once a week, about eight of us would be picked up out in front of the studio and be taken to one of the veteran's hospitals, where we would draw portraits of the wounded soldiers.

Besides the features, you also worked on all thirteen of the Chip 'n' Dale shorts.

There had been a Mickey Mouse cartoon with two chipmunks in it that looked exactly alike. They had worked out pretty well, so the next time we used them we tried to develop a contrast between them. For a while we had buck teeth on Dale, which I never liked and gradually eliminated. But I see they've brought them back on the new *Rescue Rangers* series.

As a top animator, were you ever subjected to a weekly footage quota?

I was always fairly fast. At one time I was averaging between twenty and thirty feet per week. They asked me to slow down, and I'd meet my quota around Wednesday noon.

They were always after me to put more slapstick in it. I watched different artists draw, and even a couple of the top ones had a heck of a time. They'd have to measure in practically every drawing to make sure it was properly proportioned. I never had to measure anything. I have what I call "visual imagination," in that I can

An animator and his assistant check a scene on the Movieola.



actually see a drawing before I finish it.

You were involved in making some experimental pictures – projects like *Jack and Old Mac* and *Noah's Ark*.

I was called into a meeting and told to start thinking about how to produce a Disney-quality product that didn't cost as much as animation. A heck of an assignment! That was on a Friday afternoon. At 2:00 am Saturday morning I woke up with this crazy idea of using inanimate objects as characters, using stop-motion photography. Xavier Atencio and I went out and bought around forty dollars worth of little pieces of junk – chains and things. I arranged to have the camera department, and with all of this stuff and the simple little backgrounds we'd drawn, I did about fifty feet of stop-motion photography in about 3-1/2 hours. Walt looked at it and said that it worked okay, but we needed a story. So T. Hee was hired to write the story of *Noah's Ark*. T. helped to design the characters for the film, and I did all but a very few scenes. It wound up being a twenty-minute short subject.

I now know that what they were looking for was something like the Muppets. Good quality, funny stuff that can be done in quantity. We did quite a bit of stop-motion photography: the credits for *The Shaggy Dog* and *The Parent Trap*, as well as *Babes in Toyland*.

What was the last animated feature you worked on?

I did a little bit on *Winnie the Pooh*. Xavier and I had done the storyboards, which were almost exactly like the book. Walt liked them and said not to change a thing. Woolie's unit had a big group of animators that needed some work. So they took all of our storyboards and gave them to Woolie, and then moved me over to WED. I liked it at the studio and didn't want to go at the time, but it turned out to be the best move I ever made because of the wonderful contacts we made.

My assignment was to put my knowledge of animation into the Audio-Animatronic figures. My first job was programming the "Pirates of the Caribbean" attraction. The people there could make the figures move, but they really weren't animators. There was so much work that went into them! Programming the movement of the figures kept us busy all of the time. We had to time the opening and closing of the curtains, the doors, the music, the lights dimming, the turntables, the sound system. You're the

animator, the director, the producer, the whole darned thing! I worked on "Mr. Lincoln," "Country Bear Jamboree," "The Haunted Mansion," and "Hall of the Presidents" at Disney World in Orlando.

You retired in 1979 but still do quite a bit of public appearance work on behalf of the Disney organization, don't you?

I'm not doing as much as I used to. In 1986 I did over fifty shows, and I've been back on the S.S. Norway Vacation Cruises eight times as an entertainer. I've developed a show with a former big-band piano player named Judy Darling. While I'm drawing Pinocchio she'll play "I Got No Strings on Me." When I draw Snow White, she'll play "Some Day my Prince Will Come." I do a slide show about my career, then there's a question and answer session and autographing afterwards.

The National Fantasy Fan Club and Mouse Club invite me all of the time. I just got back from Florida three weeks ago from another convention, and I was in San Francisco last week for the Bay Area Youth Fair. It keeps me busy.

Looking back over your career, is there anything in particular that you are most proud of?

There are several things I'm proud of. I'm proud of the work I did on *Bambi*. I did quite a few of the scenes where he and Thumper are on the ice. I'm proud of the

Portrait sketching at a veteran's hospital.



work I did on "The Mickey Mouse Club March," which was the first piece of film I ever directed. I'm proud of the work I did on the Audio-Animatronic figures. I also designed the floats for the Disneyland Christmas parades from 1959 to 1979, as well as the Main Street Electrical Parades. I also designed the costumes for the 135 figures that walk around the park. I did some of the murals at Disneyland, some 78 figures that still look brand new. I did a large mural at Disney World in Orlando. Then there's the carousel at Disneyland, which tells the story of Sleeping Beauty in nine murals. I also

decorated the Baby Station at Disney World, where children can find "lost parents" [laughs].

With all of your knowledge and experience with the Disney characters, were you called in for any consultation work for Roger Rabbit or any of the more recent films?

No, when you start getting grey hair you're in trouble. I feel that Roger Rabbit is basically just Bugs Bunny. It's pretty obvious that he's just Bugs.

Speaking of Bugs Bunny, what is your opinion of the work of your contemporaries at some of the other studios?

Well, the Tom and Jerrys were great, and I think a lot of those other studios had some real good animators. But in having to turn out sixty, seventy, eighty feet each week, you could never do Disney-quality animation. I imagine some of them could have, given the time and budget.

What about current animation?

I think that some of the current animation is very good. One of these days, when they get a really good story, I am sure that they will turn out a classic.

Mr. Justice, it's been a real pleasure to visit with you this afternoon and discuss what I would think is one of the most versatile careers in animation that I've ever heard of.

Interview copyright © 1990 John Province.

Chip 'n' Dale greet Animato readers.



Koko Komments

A Fleischer Studios' Column by G. Michael Dobbs

The Making of Gulliver's Travels Part Two



An illustration from a *Gulliver's Travels* book published at the time of the movie's release.

Anticipation was running high in Miami, Florida during the month of December in 1939. Children were looking forward to the upcoming Christmas season, as were shopkeepers; but the big news was the premiere of the animated feature-length cartoon, *Gulliver's Travels*, made at Miami's new movie studio, the Fleischer Studios. The Miami Chamber of Commerce saw this event as a validation of the long-held Florida notion that the "Sunshine State" was just as good a place to make movies as California, and a huge world premiere event was being planned.

In the December 6th, 1939 edition of *Variety*, Max Fleischer announced his studio would produce another feature, as he was quite confident of the success of *Gulliver's Travels*. Paramount also announced in the same issue that a Spanish-language version of *Gulliver* was being prepared, and that 41 prints of the film would be available for Christmas with another fifty for New Year's Day release.

A massive advertising plan was put into play with an estimated potential of reaching 60,000,000 people. Included in the plan were elaborate full-color ads in magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Good Housekeeping*, a first for the Fleischer Studios.

Much was riding on the success of *Gulliver's Travels*. Fleischer needed a hit because of his financial relationship with Paramount. Although his association with the studio pre-dated the talkies, Fleischer was finding his role changing with Paramount. They had fronted him money to build his new studio and to make *Gulliver*. They were calling the shots now more than ever.

To make matters worse, the relationship between Max and his brother Dave was deteriorating. The brothers had been "married" into the business together by the wishes of their parents, and Dave wanted to be out on his own. He had tried to make the break during the "Out of the Inkwell" days of the 1920s, but had been drawn back into the studio. Some people have reported that by 1939 Max and Dave were only communicating when their business dictated it.

The success of *Gulliver's Travels* would also mean a vindication of the Fleischer studio's place in the animation industry. According to Ruth Kneitel, Max's daughter, her father would attend screenings of Disney's shorts and would often comment how his cartoons were just as good. Max was a proud man, and certainly was upset that the public thought Disney had produced the first synchronized sound cartoon.

Fleischer, working with Dr. Lee DeForrest, achieved that break-through in 1924, five years before *Steamboat Willie*. Disney's first success in animation, the "Alice in Cartoonland" series, was a blatant rip-off of the "Out of the Inkwell" format Fleischer had popularized. Among all the major animation studios — Lantz, Terry, Van Beuren, Harman-Ising, Warner, and Fleischer — the Disney organization was the only one to have garnered serious treatment from the media, which was another irritation to the men and women of the Fleischer studio.

The feature had put considerable strain on the Fleischer staff, which was eager to not only have the feature finished, but get response from the public. In *The Flipper*, a booklet published for the Fleischer Studios, numerous artists and writers contributed cartoons, poems and essays on the experience of making a feature.

A Song of Impatience

By Seymour Reit

The feature's finished,
the feature's done

Work is over and worry's begun

Come bite your nails,

come tear your hair

Come harry the gods in
hysterical prayer.

We mumble morosely,
all joy we despise

As we watch the growth of
rings 'neath our eyes

And we wait for the day that
the critic unravels

The wondrous merits of
"Gulliver's Travels."

Hark! Winchell and Fidler
and Nugent and all!

When "Gulliver" opens,
heed promptly the call.

We know it's a "wow"
and we're sure it will click,
But hurry, we beg you,
and tell us that quick!

Gulliver's Travels would show the public and the critics that Disney was not the only animator of note.

The big day was Monday December 18th, 1939. Paramount officials, Florida politicians, members of the social elite, and entertainment figures descended upon Miami's Sheridan and Colony Theaters for the world premiere. A special unit of police helped hold back a crowd straining behind rope barricades for a glimpse of the rich and

famous. Overhead floated a balloon with the theaters' names and banners reading "Gulliver's Travels, World Premiere." Spotlights illuminated the scene just the same way they did at Hollywood openings. Max was dressed nattily in a tuxedo, while radio star Jessica Dragonette, who had supplied the singing voice of Princess Glory, was the height of sophisticated elegance. The *Miami Herald* gushed over the assembled dignitaries and made special note of how popular CBS radio announcer Ted Husing tried sneaking through the crowds disguised by a pair of amber glasses.

The premiere even boasted an appearance by Gulliver himself. No, not Sam Parker, who had supplied Gulliver's voice, but an unidentified man nearly seven feet

a feature, we faced some very real problems. For example, more than two years is required to produce an animated cartoon feature in color and sound, provided one has a large enough staff sufficiently experienced and coordinated to do the work.

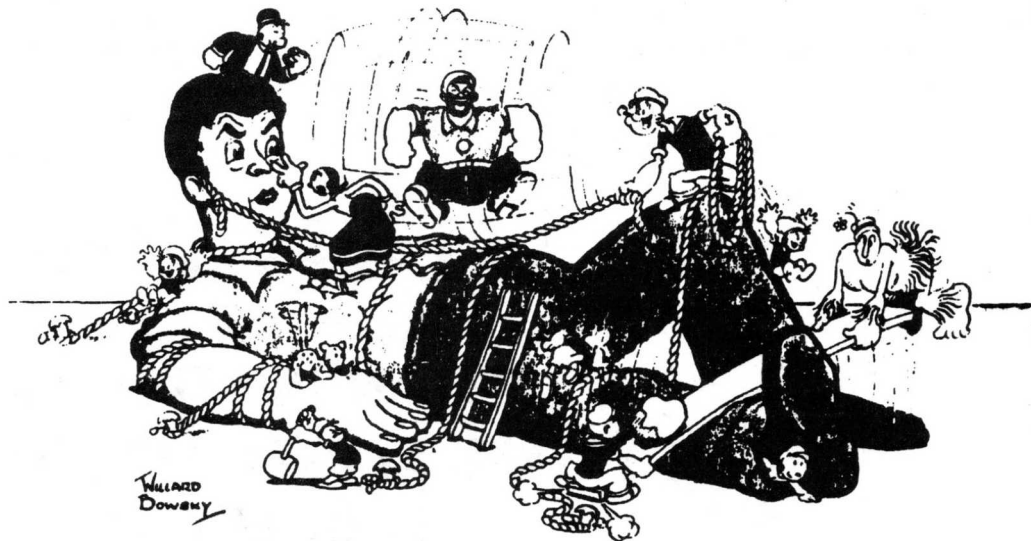
"When we started this picture we lacked space, manpower and the machinery for feature work. We only had one and a half years instead of two years in which to build, move, organize, equip, and complete the picture for distribution by Christmas, 1939."

Although Fleischer made some humorous remarks about some of the obstacles the feature had to overcome, his message was clear. *Gulliver* had been an almost impossible assignment.

The next gauntlets to run were the critics

Animator Willard Bowsky's vision of what life at Fleischer's after *Gulliver* would be like.

NOW THAT THE FEATURE'S FINISHED . . .



tall decked out in a Gulliver costume.

The next morning Fleischer, Lanny Ross, Jessica Dragonette, and Paramount officials met with Florida politicians at a special luncheon. It was a pat-on-the-back session which nonetheless did have a small note of reality from Max. When it was his turn to speak, Fleischer recounted the very tough assignment Paramount had given him.

"Eighteen months ago when the decision was made to produce *Gulliver's Travels* as

and the public. The public loved the film, making it one of the top money-making films of the year. Millions of dollars were spent on *Gulliver* merchandise.

The critics were another matter. *The New York Times* dismissed the feature as a "fairy tale for children," while *Snow White* had been a "fairy tale for adults." The paper's critic thought the film was entertaining enough, but was just not up to the standard set by Disney. *Variety*, on the other hand,

described the movie as "an excellent job of animation, audience interest, and all-around showmanship." The trade publication believed the two films should not be compared. *Newsweek* also enjoyed the film.

Looking at *Gulliver's Travels* today, one can see several real problems with the film. For me, the characters of the Prince and Princess are terribly realized. They seem only to exist as vehicles for the singing performances of Jessica Dragonette and Lanny Ross. Despite the vaunted reputation Grim Natwick had developed as an animator of female characters, the Princess is unmemorable. The one scene in which the Prince speaks is ruined because of the odd high-pitched voice Dave Fleischer decided to use.

The worst scene in the film is the odd walking scene in which Gabby is telling a tall tale to Gulliver in verse. The dialogue here just doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of the movie, and the scene certainly doesn't advance the plot much.

The songs are also a bit of a drawback for audiences today, I think, although the composers Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger were considered top-notch talent at the time the film was made. The biggest hit of the film was Sammy Timberg's "It's a Hap-Hap-Happy Day," which he fought to get

into the picture.

I do like the film tremendously, though, because there are indeed wonderful moments and characters....Gulliver sitting at a makeshift table illuminated by firelight, his hand dancing with the Lilliputians, the wonderful "capture" sequence, and the Three Stooges-like spies are among my favorites.

The Fleischer Studio responded to *Gulliver's* success by putting its "star," Gabby the Town Crier, into a series of solo cartoons. The characters of *Gulliver's Travels*, unlike Popeye, were the studio's own creations and they hoped Gabby would be a hit in short subjects and in subsequent merchandising. Eight Gabby shorts were announced for the 1940-1941 Fleischer production schedule. Although there are some laughs in these cartoons, the character did not catch on with audiences. Gabby was a braggart and bully, an antihero who was more obnoxious than amusing.

By the time the January 10th, 1940 edition of *Variety* was published, Paramount had made the announcement that Fleischer would make a second feature. "Getting the right story, it is said by Paramount's story department, is made difficult by the demands of the company's heads it should not be scary, yet have suspense," reported

the newspaper. One should note the Paramount story department, as opposed to the Fleischer story department, was making choices for the next feature.

By June 1940, Max had begun his own work in developing the studio's own story for the next feature...but that is another tale.

After Max lost the studio in 1942, *Gulliver's Travels* remained a Paramount property until the company sold it and the second Fleischer feature, *Mr. Bug Goes to Town*, to National Telefilms Associates in the mid-fifties. Both films saw theatrical release in the late fifties and subsequent sale to television.

Notes on last issue's column and other matters: 1. The debut date in the first half of this article was a typographical error. Sorry! [The mistake wasn't Mike Dobbs's, but mine. — Harry McCracken.] 2. Another source said that Max wanted a musical version while Dave wanted a satire closer to Swift. I'm inclined to believe Dave would have wanted a musical because of his love of music. 3. My apologies to the UCLA Film Archives. I did not mean to imply any incompetence on their part. 4. Change of address: Please feel free to write me at 17 Spruce St., Springfield MA 01105.

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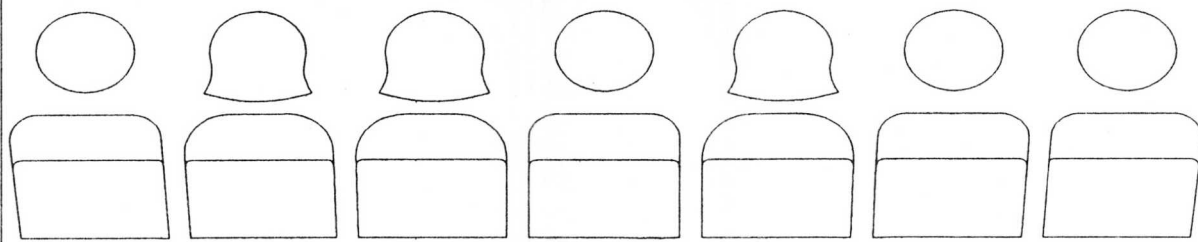
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Animato Film Poll

Back again by popular demand, may we present the Animato film poll — listings of your favorite animated films in each of our five categories. Once again, please forgive us for not listing directors and for printing this in such small type, but that allows us to include as much of each list as possible.

To cast your ballots (or for those of you who have already sent yours in, to update your old ballots), send in your top ten in each category (in order of preference, please) to Animato, PO Box 1240, Cambridge, MA 02238. Remember, you can vote for films you don't see here — who knows, you could start a groundswell!

Feature Films

1. *Fantasia*
2. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*
3. *Yellow Submarine*
4. *Pinocchio*
5. *The Secret of NIMH*
6. *Bambi*
7. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*
8. *101 Dalmations*
9. *Watership Down*
10. *Wizards*
11. *Dumbo*
12. *Heavy Metal*
13. *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*
14. *Allegro Non Troppo*
15. *Rock & Rule*
16. *Peter Pan*
17. *Lady and the Tramp*
18. *Castle of Cagliostro*
19. *Tron*
20. *The Jungle Book*
21. *The Little Mermaid*
22. *The Hobbit*
23. *The Black Cauldron*
24. *Warriors of the Wind*
25. *The Last Unicorn*
26. *Be Forever Yamato*
27. *The Great Mouse Detective*
28. *Raggedy Ann and Andy*
29. *Phoenix 2772*
30. *Lord of the Rings*
31. *Gay Purr-ee*
32. *Robin Hood*
33. *Lensman*
34. *Song Of the South*
35. *Galaxy Express 999*
36. *Mr. Bug Goes to Town*
37. *Three Caballeros*
38. *Cinderella*
39. *The Rescuers*
40. *The Brave Little Toaster*
41. *Fantastic Planet*
42. *Plague Dogs*
43. *Animal Farm*
44. *Terra Hei*
45. *Sea Prince and Fire Child*
46. *An American Tail*
47. *A Boy Named Charlie Brown*
48. *Fritz the Cat*
49. *Fire and Ice*
50. *Grendel Grendel Grendel*

Theatrical Shorts

1. *Little Rural Riding Hood*
2. *Duck Amuck*
3. *One Froggy Evening*
4. *What's Opera, Doc?*
5. *The Band Concert*
6. *Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2 Century*
7. *Coal Black & de Sebben Dwarfs*
8. *Popeye Meets Sinbad the Sailor*
9. *The Dover Boys*
10. *Bad Luck Blackie*
11. *Rabbit of Seville*
12. *The Great Piggy Bank Robbery*
13. *Snow White*
14. *Robin Hood Daffy*
15. *Popeye Meets Ali Baba's 40 Thieves*
16. *Bimbo's Initiation*
17. *The Old Mill*
18. *Book Revue*
19. *Duck Rabbit Duck*
20. *Mechanical Monsters*
21. *King Size Canary*
22. *Porky in Wackyland*
23. *Hareway to the Stars*
24. *Minnie the Moocher*
25. *The Skeleton Dance*
26. *The Cat Who Hated People*
27. *Cookie Carnival*
28. *Mickey's Trailer*
29. *Wabbit Twouble*
30. *Mad as a Mars Hare*
31. *Superman*
32. *Gerald McBoing Boing*
33. *A Wild Hare*
34. *Kitty Kornered*
35. *Dizzy Red Riding Hood*
36. *Clock Cleaners*
37. *I Love to Singa*
38. *Aladdin's Lamp*
39. *Lucky Ducky*
40. *Der Fuhrer's Face*
41. *Trick or Treat*
42. *Apple Andy*
43. *Red Hot Riding Hood*
44. *The Mad Doctor*
45. *Tummy Trouble*
46. *Three Little Pups*
47. *Let's Celebrate*
48. *Lonesome Ghosts*
49. *Solid Serenade*
50. *Scrappy's Television*

Independent Shorts

1. *Wizard of Speed and Time*
2. *The Great Cognito*
3. *Animato*
4. *Futuropolis*
5. *Bambi Meets Godzilla*
6. *Closed Mondays*
7. *Quasi at the Quackadero*
8. *Tango*
9. *Knickknack*
10. *Broken Down Film*
11. *The Big Snit*
12. *Luxo Jr.*
13. *Technological Threat*
14. *The Collector (Mickey Madness)*
15. *Vincent*
16. *Opera*
17. *Anna and Bella*
18. *Jumping*
19. *Make Me Psychic*
20. *Crac*
21. *Tin Toy*
22. *The Critic*
23. *The Devil's Ball*
24. *Your Face*
25. *Furies*
26. *Sunbeam*
27. *Rapid Eye Movements*
28. *Sundae in New York*
29. *The Street*
30. *Elbowing*
31. *The Interview*
32. *Seaside Woman*
33. *The Fly*
34. *Oil Spot and Lipstick*
35. *Ubu*
36. *Frank Film*
37. *Van Kant Danz*
38. *Adventures of An **
39. *Tony De Peltrie*
40. *Allegretto*
41. *Mosaic*
42. *Stanley and the Dinosaur*
43. *Get a Job*
44. *Flying Fur*
45. *Sand Castle*
46. *Hot Stuff*
47. *Viewmaster*
48. *Bridge to Your Heart*
49. *La Tendresse du Maudit*
50. *And She Was*

Television Specials

1. *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*
2. *Family Dog*
3. *A Christmas Carol*
4. *A Charlie Brown Christmas*
5. *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*
6. *A Doonesbury Special*
7. *A Claymation Christmas*
8. *Rikki Tikki Tavi*
9. *Ziggy's Christmas*
10. *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*
11. *Banjo the Woodpile Cat*
12. *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol*
13. *Here Comes Garfield*

TV Series

1. *Bullwinkle/Rocky & His Friends*
2. *Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures*
3. *Dangermouse*
4. *Jonny Quest*
5. *George of the Jungle*
6. *The Jetsons (old episodes)*
7. *The Flintstones*
8. *Beany and Cecil*
9. *DuckTales*
10. *Dungeons and Dragons*
11. *Lupin III*
12. *Star Trek*
13. *Dirty Pair*
14. *Starblazers*
15. *Real Ghostbusters*
16. *Alf/Alf Tales*
17. *Yogi Bear*
18. *Top Cat*
19. *Adventures of the Gummi Bears*
20. *Kimba the White Lion*
21. *Astro Boy*
22. *Robotech*
23. *Count Duckula*
24. *Tom Terrific*
25. *Cat's Eye*
26. *Misadventures of Ed Grimley*
27. *Roger Ramjet*
28. *Speed Racer*
29. *Space Ghost*
30. *Fantastic Four*
31. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*
32. *The 8th Man*
33. *Hoppity Hooper*
34. *Mighty Orbots*
35. *Huckleberry Hound*
36. *Inspector Gadget*
37. *Maple Town*
38. *Dynomutt*
39. *Wally Gator*
40. *Thundercats*
41. *Cities of Gold*
42. *G.I. Joe*
43. *The Alvin Show*
44. *The Simpsons*
45. *New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*
46. *Good Morning Spank*
47. *New Adventures of Flash Gordon*
48. *Beany and Cecil (new episodes)*
49. *Underdog*
50. *Galaxy High*

14. *A Pogo Special Birthday Special*
15. *Charlie Brown's All Stars*
16. *Sport Goofy in Soccermania*
17. *Meet the Raisins*
18. *Here Comes Peter Cottontail*
19. *The Snowman*
20. *A Cosmic Christmas*
21. *It's Flashbeagle, Charlie Brown*
22. *Frosty the Snowman*
23. *Christmas in July*
24. *Kotec the White Seal*
25. *Cathy*
26. *A Soldier's Tale*
27. *The Lorax*
28. *Garfield's Nine Lives*
29. *Garfield's Halloween*
30. *Babar and Father Christmas*

Flipbooks

A Book Column by David Bastian

Chuck Jones on
Chuck Jones;
Joe Adamson on
Bugs Bunny



Bugs Bunny's coat of arms, as imagined by Chuck Jones in Chuck Amuck. Copyright © Warner Bros. Inc.

Chuck Amuck: the Life and Times of an Animated Cartoonist

By Chuck Jones

Farrar Straus Giroux; \$24.95

Chuck Jones is probably the most famous name in animation history after Walt Disney, and his career and films have been traced more closely than those of any other director next to Tex Avery. So I will spare you the indignity of an introduction. I won't start an argument by proposing what I feel to be his best work. I won't even suggest that he was the best director at Warner's. Among fans of the WB output, there are definitely camps: the overlapping Clampett and Avery camps, with their fondness for commenting on the unique aspects of the medium of animation, and the Jones camp, among whom character and motivation reign supreme.

I'll just say that Mr. Jones's long-awaited autobiography is directed towards those who will wholeheartedly agree with him when he states that "Character always comes first." That's not to say that you must favor Jones's approach to animation in order to like this book. But it helps.

Throughout his career at Warner's, Jones established rules for himself concerning how the characters should be handled. The notion that Bugs Bunny only becomes aggressive when provoked is one that Jones adheres to staunchly. As he puts it, "There is no such thing as sympathy without believability; there is no such thing as real laughter without sympathy." Avery would dispute this, but no matter. That two such different directors could emerge from the same studio is one of the things that make studying the Warner cartoons so interesting. And the fact that Jones is the only Warner's director to share his own experiences at such length makes this book all the more valuable.

Those unhesitant to experience Jones on Jones will find a wealth of his filmmaking philosophy in these pages. Here at last is Jones's own account of the evolution and inner workings of the character of Bugs Bunny. And though he didn't create that character (and doesn't make the claim), he did contribute more to Bugs's complexity than any of the other directors who were given the chance first.

Listing those films which he feels to be important in Bugs's earliest development (including his own first attempts), Jones gives us a chronology that is interesting to compare with the ones in Maltin's *Of Mice and Magic* and Schneider's *That's All Folks*. The list is similar, but the attitude differs. Jones displays his love for Bugs by describing him as being "in the good hands of

parents who loved and admired him...and who were just as uncertain as parents are about our contributions to the children's growth."

The book is at its most enjoyable when Jones is volleying the reader back and forth between a specific childhood lesson he learned and how he applied it to his craft. In the opening chapter we are introduced to Johnson, the mysterious cat who one day wandered down the beach and adopted Jones's family. From Johnson, Jones learned to "eschew the ordinary," and that "it is the individual, the oddity, the peculiarity that counts." Memories of living by the ocean and his father's gentle lectures on the importance of learning to swim lead us into Jones's experiences working on his adaptation of Kipling's *The White Seal*, which themselves lead into a dissertation on the importance of studying animal anatomy.

But the lessons didn't stop with childhood's end. As an animator in the early days of Warner's, he worked under both Tex Avery and Friz Freleng, and he devotes an entire chapter to his admiration for them. His lists of "What I learned on my way to becoming a competent director" and the nine rules of the Road Runner series could be taken as philosophical counterparts to the lists of rules for technical expertise in Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston's *Disney Animation: the Illusion of Life*.

Both animators and fans will find Jones's thoughts very inspiring, in a way that is impossible to convey except by sharing it: "As you develop a character, you are, of course, looking into a mirror, a reflection of yourself, your ambitions and hopes, your realizations and fears." Passages like that make you want to get up and make something!

Interestingly, there is an undercurrent which runs through the book that suggests that the Warner studio employees (for all their cajolery) were less than happy with their work situation: the studio manager whose insensitivity to their work resulted in the installment of a command post and warning lights to signal his coming; the writer (Cal Howard) who managed a bistro concealed in his desk; the janitor who for 45 minutes a night would nap on the private toilet of the producer, his "quiet contribution to the studio-wide contempt and studio-rebellion." Not to mention the adverse effects Schlesinger and his successor Selzer had on the output of the studio.

Jones's advocacy of rebellion may seem strange coming from someone who is otherwise sensitive to the need to create rules. But Jones attributes (to an extent) some of the studio's finest work to its "constant fight

against negativism."

Perhaps the point of all this is not to blindly adopt Jones's rules, or anyone else's. An artist must go his own way, as Warner Bros. went its own way from Disney, and as Jones went his own way from his colleagues at Warner's. But Jones's best work is testament to the importance of establishing a set of guidelines for oneself, and then working within those guidelines. What the WB directors found out was that once a character was developed around guidelines for what he would and wouldn't do, story ideas seemed almost to suggest themselves.

This fact becomes evident in the book's longest section, a detailed account of the making of a Warner Bros. cartoon, beginning with the first germ of an idea and then taking us through each stage of production to the finished film. Unlike the many animation historians who feel obliged to include only a dry aside explaining the process, Jones personalizes the experience by introducing us at each interval to the particular Warner staffer who filled that job. (A stage of the process which may have been unique to Warner's was the "Yes Session," during which only positive comments were allowed and a story idea was judged by its ability to inspire further ideas.) This chapter alone is a valuable record of the Warner cartoon production process.

This being the only book by an insider on "how it really was" at Warner's, there is an extra burden on Jones to be thorough and accurate. Some readers who come to the book with this expectation may be disappointed. Jones is an intellectual (perhaps the first in his field), and never passes up an opportunity to embellish an anecdote with his encyclopedic wit. This leaves us as frustrated as entertained; when Jones begins a passage with "If Tedd Piece were to conduct a tour of the studio, it might have gone something like this," we wonder all through the next five pages whether what we're reading isn't complete fiction.

Those hungering for a meaty historical volume will feel slighted by the light-and-airy style of its scrapbook-like format. In addition to drawing on press releases and articles which he wrote years ago for the Museum of Modern Art and Gallery Lainzberg, Jones peppers his pages with sketches, photos, studio Christmas cards, memos from studio personnel (some pertaining to the 1941 strike), a letter to Jones from Ben Washam, and transcripts of six of his cartoons. None of this is bad, but there are pieces missing. We are whisked through Jones's apprenticeship at Walter Lantz's studio too hastily, without picking up any

impressions of what Jones thought of Lantz. Equally brief are his accounts of working for Ub Iwerks and the Pentagon, his participation in the first UPA cartoon, his short stint with Disney (!), and his year as a vice president of children's programming at ABC, which resulted in the admirable but tedious *Curiosity Shop*. Not just coincidentally, there is scant mention of coeval Clampett (if you can't say something nice...).

But then the book opens with no less than three disclaimers cautioning the reader who is in search of facts. Jones sees his responsibility to be not so much accuracy in "time and place" as in "feeling and spirit." Leave history to the historians; now that we have several objective histories of animation to choose from, it's easier to put personal recollections from Bill Peet, Jack Kinney, Shamus Culhane, and Jones into their proper perspective.

Jones's book does not concern itself with trying to set the record straight so much as it does with giving us an idea of the creative conditions and atmosphere of the Warner Bros. studio and its employees as only an insider could do. This he does with words that are often as poetic as his cartoons. For me, the page that sums it all up is page 218: a photo of Chuck in his home (circa 1960), lolling on a couch surrounded by paintings, brushes, and two tree lamps, and dwarfed by a massive unabridged dictionary in the foreground; the perfect portrait of a man whose best work was a marriage of words and images.

Bugs Bunny: Fifty Years and Only One Grey Hare

By Joe Adamson

Henry Holt and Co.; \$35.00

Bugs Bunny is the single greatest animated cartoon character in the history of film. No other creation comes close. When we talk of the "unlimited potential of the medium," especially the potential that has yet to be reached, we are talking about him. The term "suspension of disbelief" is used to weigh a movie's success in involving us with the drama on the two-dimension screen, a phenomenon that made photography so powerful and became the live-action cinema's stock in trade. But to achieve this effect without a photographically-recorded performance (or "stencil of light," as Susan Sontag called it), but with mere drawings which act out a performance that never happened, is something akin to magic. We've become involved with many cartoon characters in the last ninety years. But in qualitative degrees. Bugs Bunny is a metaphor for the apex of

this involvement.

His closest rival is Mickey Mouse, and Mickey is as deserving of a fiftieth birthday book as Bugs is. But read *Mickey Mouse: Fifty Happy Years* alongside Joe Adamson's *Bugs Bunny: Fifty Years and Only One Grey Hare*, and it becomes evident that our love for Mickey is more subjective, more rooted in nostalgia. There is a sense of time and place associated with his image, his films, and every tin toy that ever bore his likeness that does not seem to haunt Bugs quite as much. Our love of Bugs needs less of a historical preface, less of a context to understand. Oh sure, Bugs's heyday was the war years, just as Mickey's was the depression. But a depression is best fought by tightening the old belt and holding tough. A war is best fought by tightening one's bootstraps and yelling "Charge!" (Indeed, Mickey's escapades for the most part took place within the walls of a benign, pastoral toontown, while Bugs's adventures took place "on location," facing the challenges and threats of the outside world.)

Put another way, the atmosphere of sim-

But in addition to these early rabbit pragmatists, Adamson feels Bugs's most important ancestor to be Charlie Chaplin, whose dictum that "nothing transcended personality" was carried over to the Hollywood cartoon by Bugs alone. Before the wascally wabbit first popped up from his hutch, displaying a personality of his very own, theater audiences had to be content to find amusement in the fact that a cartoon character could express any personality at all — and this includes Mickey Mouse, whose phenomenal success was primarily a result of his attractive design. (Remember all those Maurice Sendak essays a few years back?)

In Adamson's view, Bugs was the first cartoon character to combine, like Chaplin's Little Tramp, the Comic and the Hero. The examples he uses to strengthen the tie between Bugs and Chaplin are the sort of serious film study that the live-action cinema enjoys only rarely and the animated cinema almost never.

Telling Bugs's story is impossible to do without also telling the tale of the Warner

own interviews with members of the Warner staff! His version is not just one more rehash — it's the last word!

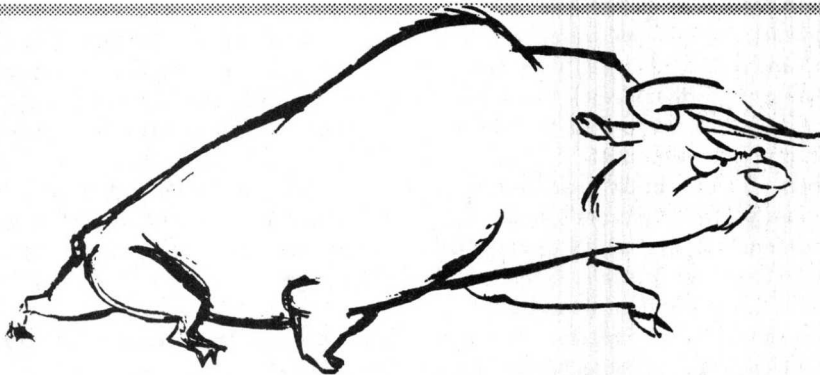
It is interesting to note that the issue of the collective fathering of Bugs Bunny has been bandied about more times than any similar questions about Mickey Mouse's creation; Mickey's birth is shrouded in the Disney myth and that delirious train ride. The story of Mickey's development usually focuses on the alterations made in his design. Clues as to who contributed what (pupils courtesy Kimball?) can be found in the plethora of Disney books, but no one has sat down and tried to sort it all out the way that's been done with Bugs. That, I suppose is the problem with having only one father: poor Mickey, historically deprived of an artistic past!

The last segment of Adamson's book raises similar questions about what we value in Bugs versus what we value in Mickey. A list of Mickey's greatest hits will usually include those films in which the gags are carried out through impressive artwork: *The Band Concert*, *Mickey's Trailer*, and others. With Bugs, we are willing to forego the issue of art in favor of subject matter — what the cartoon is about instead of how the artists went about doing it.

Adamson strives to hone his Greatest Hits list for Bugs down to sixteen films which he feels "capture just about everything that is great about Bugs Bunny." You will no doubt quarrel with his choice of favorites, but his analyses are so inspiring that you'll wish he went on to discuss every Warner's cartoon ever made. To Adamson, Bugs is at his greatest when he's satirizing high art ("There's something funny about everything grand, and something grand about everything funny"); sending up show-biz clichés ("When they won't accept the old corn anymore, give it a roast until it pops, and they'll eat it up"); lampooning his own formulas ("Whatever it took to avoid staleness and redundancy"); and play-acting ("My, I'll bet you mahnsters lead *interesting* lives").

Along the way, Adamson utilizes a few quotes from Chuck Jones that Jones himself actually hasn't exploited yet. (Savor his comments on *Bully for Bugs*.) And Friz Freleng shares his thoughts on the making of one of his favorites, *Rhapsody Rabbit*.

With this, his third book on the subject of animation, Joe Adamson proves himself to be its best historical writer. This may not be the first search for the elusive Bugs, but like the searches for Seymour Glass and Sebastian Knight, it's the most "interesting." And the most fun to read.



The formidable bull Bugs Bunny tangled with in *Bully for Bugs* (1953). From *Bugs Bunny: Fifty Years and Only One Grey Hare*; copyright © Warner Bros. Inc.

plicity and innocence which is at the center of the beauty of the Mickey films makes them difficult to "get at." In all probability they could not be made today. The frenetic pace of the Roger Rabbit films is an indication that we are attempting to get at Bugs.

In his attempt to get at Bugs, Adamson is not content to paste together the usual collection of "magic moments" from the career of a Hollywood star that this kind of book usually presents. Instead, he has written a book that is as much a history of the Hollywood cartoon — no, make that a history of the evolution of screen comedy — no, wait, make that the history of pragmatism itself, as it all leads up to Bugs Bunny. Bugs's family tree is traced back as far as the African folk tales of Zomo the trickster rabbit, who is himself a forefather of Bre'r Rabbit, another of Bugs's ancestors.

studio. Once the bunny became the studio's symbol, the pressure to emulate Walt Disney was forever relieved; finally, the studio could stop eating Walt's Disney dust. For the directors, Bugs represented a level of success that Leon Schlesinger found difficult to argue with. The creative impetus that Chuck Jones has attributed to the "fight against negativism," Adamson attributes to "The Bugs Bunny Spirit."

One would think that in the wake of the recent spate of books on the Warner Bros. cartoons, yet another one would be hard-pressed to wring new insights from the already-overworked subject of Bugs's birth — who his real creators were, and which of the formative rabbit films to include in his cartoonography. But it's important to keep in mind that most of the previous accounts of the bunny's birth drew from Adamson's

WINNERS BY A HARE

Continued from Page 28

16. *A-Lad-In His Lamp* (1948)

Directed by Robert McKimson; story by Warren Foster

Bugs digs his new hole in a gorgeous Richard H. Thomas pastel forest and finds Aladdin's Lamp. The genie therein offers to grant Bugs a wish. Bugs' offhand comment "I wish I could go to Bagdad" is a self-fulfilling prophecy as the Genie whisks the bunny off to the city by the bay — Turhan Bay, that is. Bugs is then pursued for the lamp by Caliph Hassen Pheffer, one of those large men with a beard and a big sword seen in cartoons of this type. The Genie is repeatedly called on by Bugs for help at inopportune times, which helps set up the final gag: the Caliph finally rubs the lamp, one time too many for the Genie's taste, so he beats the crap out of the Caliph. The Genie then sets up Bugs with his own hare-harem as the hero's reward.

As voiced by the late Jim Backus, whose Mr. Magoo and Thurston Howell III careers were still a while down the road, the Genie's speech is peppered with such colorful phraseology as "Heavens to Gimbel's," "Oh fiddle de dee," and "Sweet spirits of camphor." (DM)

17. *Long Haired Hare* (1949)

Directed by Chuck Jones; story by Michael Maltese

Chuck Jones and Michael Maltese's first Bugs Bunny-classical music film is less well-known than *The Rabbit of Seville* and *What's Opera, Doc?*, but only slightly less magnificent a creation. Bugs's impromptu woodland pop-music performances keep getting violently scuttled by Giovanni Jones (any relation?), a tenor trying to practice in his nearby home. Finally, Bugs declares "Oh course, you know this means war!" (sic), and when Giovanni gives his concert that night, Bugs intrudes in several ways. The climax comes when Bugs enters as as Leopold (presumably Stokowski) the conductor, and proceeds to conduct in such a way that Giovanni sings himself into exhaustion and the theater eventually crumbles.

Much of the fun here comes from the animation of burly Giovanni Jones, who's reminiscent of an animated Oliver Hardy at his most expressive. (His utter helplessness over Bugs's revenge is hilarious.) Oddly enough, the edited version of this cartoon that Jones included as part of his *Bugs Bunny-Road Runner Movie* (1979) is tighter and even funnier, perhaps the only time a Warner's cartoon has actually been improved by latter-day editing. (HM)

18. *The Old Grey Hare* (1944)

Directed by Bob Clampett; no writer credited

This cartoon was my first primitive lesson about death. Through the years, it also taught me how quickly those years go by.

Elmer is sent ahead in time to his old age, "past 1970, 1980, 1990..." (I'm old enough to remember when 1970 was the future and not the hazy past!) Winding up in the year 2000, Elmer learns from a newspaper that, among other things, that Smellovision has replaced Television (despite claims to the contrary by Carl Stalling). Old geezers Bugs and Elmer pull out the old album and relive

on a bomb (to the tune of "I've Been Working On The Railroad"). Bugs offers to help but realizes his potential mistake. Was that a Gremlin? "IT AIN'T VENDELL VILLKIE!" The gremlin takes Bugs for a plane ride he'll never forget, diabolically sabotaging Bugs's flight and causing it to plummet. Just before hitting ground zero, the plane runs out of gas, for which the Gremlin and Bugs both apologize. "You know how it is with these A cards!"

Produced at the height of Warner's borrowing from the great comics of the day, there are probably more of the famous catchphrases in this cartoon than any other.



their past. But now it's time for Bugs to die, so he digs his own grave and lowers himself in. Turnabout! Elmer's now about to be entombed, and in an eerie point of view shot from inside the grave, Bugs gleefully throws dirt on him. Closing scene: As Elmer comments on how "that pesky wabbit is out of my wife fowever and ever," Bugs from beyond the grave hands Elmer a firecracker, which explodes a bar and a half into the closing theme. (DM)

19. *Falling Hare* (1943)

Directed by Bob Clampett; story by Warren Foster

At a top secret Army air field, where even what the men think of the top sergeant is CENSORED!, we learn that gremlins wreck planes with their diabolical sabotage. Bugs scoffs, but one such little man is hammering

Typically kinetic Rod Scribner animation in this one, too. (DM)

20. *Tortoise Beats Hare* (1941)

Directed by Tex Avery; story by Dave Monahan

Bugs reads everything on the title card except "Approved MPPDA Certificate Number 6640" and the union logo, then rips the artwork apart upon learning of his fate. It's a purse of \$10 on the line as Bugs encounters the turtle around every corner. Bugs loses and hands the money over ("1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10! An' I hope ya choke!"). The turtle splits his winnings evenly with his nine identical accomplices.

The same framework was adapted by Avery for two almost-identical Droopy cartoons at MGM: *Dumb Hounded* and *North-west Hounded Police*. (DM)

The Care and Restoration of Vintage Animation Cels

VINTAGE INK & PAINT

Written by Stephen Worth and Lew Stude

Animation cels from the 1930s, '40s and '50s were originally created for the sole purpose of being photographed as a frame of action in an animated cartoon. They were not intended to last any longer than was necessary for the production of the film. In fact, cels often became damaged before they reached the camera department. It was not uncommon for an inker to assist the cameraman by making last minute repairs as the cels were being photographed. Although thousands of cels were needed to produce each cartoon, only a fraction of them still exist. The artwork that has survived is highly prized by collectors and commands ever-increasing prices on the animation art market.

The types of materials used in vintage artwork varied greatly from one studio to another. The development of plastic technology and supply shortages during World War II contributed to the wide variety of cel stock found in vintage animation art. The two types of celluloids used were *cellulose nitrate* and *cellulose acetate*. Variation in thickness, hardness and tint was common. Although nitrate cels were not highly flammable, as is generally believed, they were subject to shrinkage and discoloration when exposed to light or heat. Eventually, the use of nitrate was discontinued in favor of the more stable and transparent acetate cel material that is still in use today.

Cel paint was often manufactured in-house at the various studios, using formulas developed by trial and error. All cel paints prior to the 1960s were opaque watercolors consisting of three main components: *filler*, *pigment* and *binder*. These elements were combined and ground between stone plates in a mill to ensure even dispersion. The filler, which was usually talc, made the paint opaque and determined the drying characteristics. The pigments provided the vibrant hues, and in combination, formed all the subtle shades and tints one often sees in vintage art. (An interesting side note is that Michaelangelo used only six pigments to paint the Sistine Chapel. Disney used over forty different pigments to make up a feature palette, consisting of hundreds of colors.) The last, and perhaps most important component of paint, from an archival standpoint, is the binder. It added body to the paint and acted as the glue that bonded paint to cel. Every studio used a different kind of binder. Some simply used store-bought glue; others, like Warner Brothers, used a *casein* binder, which was an acidic glue made from dairy curd. Most of these early cel paints began chipping and flaking in a few months. The exception to this impermanence was the binder manufactured by the Disney Studios. Developed over a period of years, the Disney gum arabic based binder was the most expensive,

consistent, versatile and durable of all the vintage cel binders. Since it was rewettable and flexible when dry, it allowed for easy correction or repair; and, if properly stored, would last for many years with no deterioration.

Unfortunately, many Disney cels suffered from mistreatment. Since animation art was not considered valuable until quite recently, cels were usually stored in garages and attics where temperature and climate would vary greatly from season to season. Dehydration caused paint to become brittle and cracked, losing its bond with the cel. In an attempt to prevent this, many cels were encased between sheets of lamination, or sealed with lacquer. This ended up causing more problems than it solved. Cel binder absorbs moisture from the atmosphere to maintain its flexibility. Sealing cels under a layer of lacquer or lamination slowed the rate of moisture loss, but prevented the paint from reabsorbing humidity from the air. In addition, the solvents contained in the lamination adhesives and lacquer, as well as the glue used to attach cels to backgrounds, would attack the pigments, causing colors to fade or mottle. Other factors also contributed to damaging paint. Certain brilliant pigments were unstable and, over the years, migrated into surrounding areas, discoloring other colors. Rough handling often dislodged paint or ink lines, and since the paint was water soluble, ink and paint were often washed off accidentally or smeared.

Paint isn't the only thing susceptible to damage; the cel stock itself can deteriorate or be destroyed. Dirt and glue from tape adhesives make a cel sticky and dull. Scratches, dents and tears detract from the image. Differences between the rates of shrinkage of paint and cel stock can even cause cels to pucker and wrinkle. Nitrate cels are the most vulnerable to damage because, as it ages, cellulose nitrate shrinks, wrinkles and yellows. If nitrate is stored in direct contact with other nitrate for any length of time, it can emit fumes and resins, eventually becoming brittle and cracked, or in some cases, soluble in water. Since nitrate was made from wood pulp, it is also subject to infestations of insects or mold.

Some aging is inevitable, but there are certain precautions to take to extend the life of your cels:

- Nitrate cels should be matted with acid-free board and encased in a metal frame. Every year or two, the frame should be opened to allow the art to air for a few hours.
- Unframed cels should be stored face-down, with paper between

each level, and not stacked under weight. Whenever possible, backgrounds and cels should be stored separately until framed.

- Artwork should be displayed only in indirect light, in a moderately humid environment, away from heaters. A room humidifier can be a very helpful in dry weather to prevent dehydration.
- Great care should be taken to avoid flexing or bending brittle, old paint. If cleaning is necessary, it should be done gently, with a soft cloth that won't scratch or fog the cel material.
- Laminated or lacquered cels should be carefully inspected for damage or fading before purchase.
- If a cel is sealed in a vintage mat and frame, and appears to be in good shape, there is no reason to open it. Restoration should be attempted only if the damage is serious enough to interfere with the image.

Restoration of animation cels can be a very involved and time consuming process. Usually, it is best left to an experienced animation art conservator. There are several services which offer cel restoration, but only Vintage Ink & Paint has a thoroughly researched, historical basis for its techniques and materials. The following is a partial listing of services offered by Vintage Ink & Paint.

- **Cleaning**

Safe solvents are used to remove lacquers, dirt and tape residues, without affecting the delicate, original ink lines and paint.

- **Damaged Cel Material**

Deteriorating or torn cels can be carefully trimmed to the outlines of the character. The cut out figure is then attached to a new cel, so it can be positioned over a background without having to glue it down, which damages both the cel and background.

- **Laminated Pieces**

Cels with flaking and chipping paint sealed between sheets of lamination are probably the most time consuming to repair. First, the paint colors are mixed, correcting for the added level of plastic, and for color fading caused by lamination adhesives. After carefully cutting through the bottom layer of laminate, at the edges of the character, the lamination behind the image can be removed to gain access to the damaged paint underneath. The flaking paint is removed, and the cel is repainted through the opening in the back of the lamination.

- **Reattaching Loose Paint**

In some cases, paint that is slightly dehydrated can be re-

bonded to the cel by means of slow exposure to humidity.

- **Color Matching**

Accurate reproduction of color is the key to a well-done job of restoration. Other services talk about "reflectivity" and "spectrum analysis," but there is no form of mechanical evaluation that can surpass the trained eye. Vintage Ink & Paint can correct for yellowed nitrate and lamination, and can cross reference colors to similar cels to determine the extent of fading; but, this is never used as an excuse to repaint in the wrong colors. No other restoration service takes color matching as seriously. Upon request, swatches are available for approval before restoration is begun.

- **Repainting**

Vintage Ink & Paint uses three types of paint formulas for use on different types of cels:

- **For Disney cels**, we custom grind over fifty different pigments to form the base for mixing the different palettes of colors used over the years. This paint, which we manufacture in our lab, is the same paint that was originally on the artwork.
- **For cels from other studios**, we have developed a paint with all of the properties and appearance of the original paint, but with a longer life and greater durability.
- **For recent cels**, originally painted in acrylic paints, we restore using modern cel paints that have become the current industry standard. This widely available paint is fine for use on recent cels, but is inadequate for matching the more brilliant or subtle shades of a vintage Disney color palette.

Vintage Ink & Paint is the only restoration service able to offer the same paint that was originally on the cel, as well as vintage paint formulas, redesigned for increased durability.

- **Ink Restoration**

Colored or black ink lines can be replaced using the same pens, inks and colored paints used in the '30s, '40s and '50s. There is no loss of line definition or expression, and the color match is precise.

- **Business Practices**

Vintage Ink & Paint's professionalism also sets it apart. Advice and information are always provided at no charge, by appointment. There are no set up fees, lab fees or penalties for returning artwork before work is begun. All billing is based on work performed and there is no charge for our services if you are not satisfied. Ask about our discount for artwork transferred to us from other restoration services.

To schedule a free consultation for more information, or to obtain permission to reprint this article, in part or in whole, contact: Lew Stude (213) 849-4364 or Stephen Worth (818) 980-7637

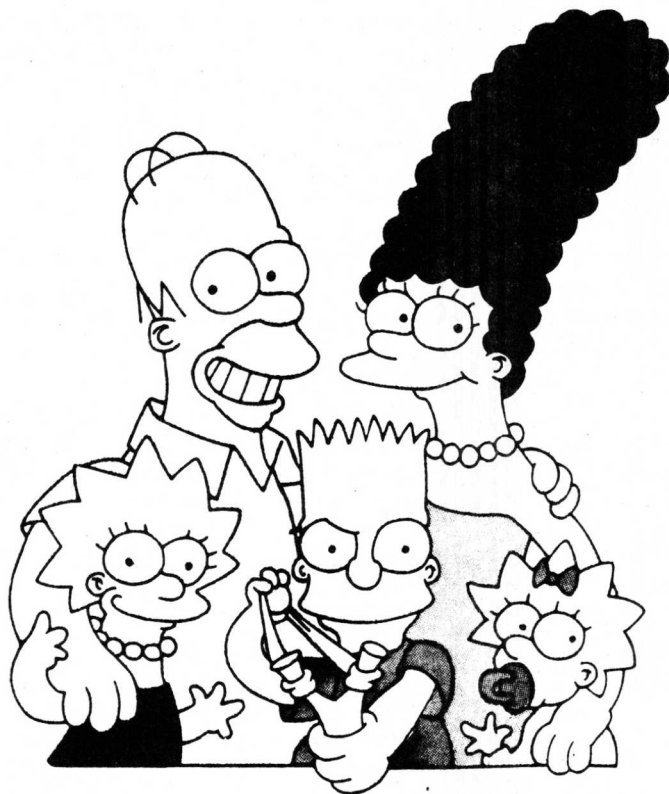
VINTAGE INK & PAINT

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Short Subjects

Reviews of Books, Films, Television Shows, and More

Bart Simpson and Family, Two Big Animation Books, and Some of the Most Obscure Cartoons Ever Made



THE SIMPSONS by MATT GROENING

The Simpsons. Copyright © 1989 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

The Simpsons

(Gracie Films/Twentieth Century Fox Television; airing on Fox Television)

Reviewed by Dave Mackey

Within animation fandom, this has become the most talked-about show since Ralph Bakshi's *Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures*. The general public has taken to it, too; since its premiere, *The Simpsons* has been the highest-rated show on Fox, despite its cast of orange-skinned, bug-eyed grotesques masquerading as your not-quite-so-typical American family. This might explain why I saw some Bart Simpson graffiti while driving down the highway a few Sunday afternoons ago.

So why is everyone having a cow over this show, man? Flash back to 1987...cartoonist Matt Groening had difficulty adapting his *Life in Hell* comic strip to animation for Fox's *Tracey Ullman Show*, so he instead created the Simpson family for a series of short bumper segments aired between Tracey's sketches, which soon became one of the show's most popular features. The expansion to a half-hour series was inevitable.

Groening drew on his own life to create the characters. There is some similarity between Bongo, the one-eared bunny from *Hell* who is Binky's illegitimate son, and Bart Simpson, the attitude-infested (though thoroughly legitimate) young son of working-class lout Homer Simpson. Besides being the central focus of their respective works, both Bongo and Bart are to some degree inspired by Groening himself.

Homer and Bart are voices respectively by Dan Castellaneta and Nancy Cartwright, whose Bart voice is sort of a cross between Paul Reubens as Pee Wee Herman and Cliff Nazarro as Egghead. Homer's wife Marge, performed by Julie Kavner, is a clone of Binky's girlfriend Sheba from *Hell*. The cast is rounded out by Bart's little sister Lisa (Yeardley Smith) and littlest sister Maggie (unidentified constant sucking on a pacifier). Inspired by Groening's real-life sisters, Lisa and Maggie's comic origins can be traced to a 1986 *Life in Hell* strip called "Lies I Told My Younger Sisters," in which they appear in rabbitized form as the younger sisters of Binky. Former *Saturday Night Live* cast member Harry Shearer provides many supporting voices, as do Marcia Wallace, Russi Taylor, Tress MacNellie, and other well-known cartoon-voice talent.

The series was previewed over the holidays with a Christmas special, and began regular Sunday night airings on January 14, 1990, leading in seamlessly to the longer-established *Married...With Children*.

Though *Married* is a hilarious show, it is raunchy, and I suspect many parents will be putting their kids to bed after the end of *Simpsons*, just as I was shuttled off to dreamland after the end of *The Flintstones* on Friday nights in my youth.

The L.A. animation house Klasky-Csupo is responsible for the animation production of the program. The opening sequence, while a little long, is never quite the same twice, so it bears close watching each week for variances in what is written by Bart on the chalkboard and when the Simpsons gather on the sofa to watch their latest adventures (sort of reminiscent of the opening to *The Flintstones*, in which they go to the drive-in to see their show). Credit Dave Silverman for his direction of this complex sequence, and Kevin Petrilak for its animation.

Besides Silverman, the other series directors are Wes Archer, Milt Gray, Rich Moore, and Kent Butterworth, a member of Ralph Bakshi's late and lamented *Mighty Mouse* production team. After a few weeks Brad Bird, who directed the now-legendary *Family Dog*, signed on as a production consultant. The work of the Klasky-Csupo cartoonists, augmented as most shows are by overseas labor but being expanded to five units of eight animators each for the next season, is unlike anything ever seen on television, taking the stark, black-and-white Groening style into a different direction with the addition of garish pastels. And there are lots of little gags and in-jokes to be seen if you look closely: a video boxing game Homer and Bart play in one episode features a referee who somewhat resembles another familiar *Life in Hell* character—one of the gay brothers, Akbar and Jeff.

As good as the voice work, animation, and layout/background design are, the writing on this show is even better. Besides Groening and series producers James L. Brooks and Sam Simon, there are a couple of writers from *Saturday Night Live* and *It's Garry Shandling's Show*, Al Jean and Michael Reiss, plus story editor Jon Vitti. They appear to put the same craft and care into their *Simpsons* scripts that they would if the show was in live action, although the use of animation is justified by gags and stunts that couldn't possibly be done live.

For instance, the premiere episode features a fantasy sequence in which Bart wrestles with math word problems. Taking a cue from the Chuck Jones cartoon *From A to Z-z-z-z-z*, Bart visualizes one problem as a train in black and white with red numbers that pile up on the floor as the problem becomes more and more complex

and have to be shoveled aside by a porter. The surplus numbers are stoked into the firebox, fueling the train to a head-on collision as Bart's reverie ends. Superb animation, voice work, and sound effects help put over this intricate gag.

The scripts have put Homer and his family through their paces in a number of humorous ways. In one episode, Homer buys a motor home so he can take the family on a camping vacation. The Simpsons become stranded in the middle of nowhere when the vehicle falls off the edge of a cliff. When they lose their clothes, Homer and Bart don mud and thatch, while baby Maggie is adopted by a family of bears (in a really cute sequence), and Marge and Lisa build a fire and fend for themselves. To complicate matters even more, Homer is mistaken for Bigfoot.

In another show, Lisa is depressed for reasons she can't seem to verbalize. She plays her saxophone in the middle of the night, and is joined by a blues singer. He explains to her why one sings the blues: "The blues isn't about feeling better, it's about makin' other people feel worse." A chat with Marge convinces Lisa that she's too young to carry the weight of the world on her shoulders.

In perhaps the most adult animated half-hour yet, Marge takes bowling lessons and is hit on by her lothario bowling instructor; she very seriously considers cheating on Homer. The instructor's bachelor pad includes many clever design motifs which would be quite logical for a bowler's home.

But Bart is responsible for wreaking the most mischief, as is demonstrated when he cheats on an IQ test and is sent off to a school for gifted children, where he is ridiculed by smarty-pants kids carrying "Bridehead Revisited" lunch pails. Or when he causes an accident while on a class trip to Homer's nuclear power plant that gets dad fired. Or when he succumbs to peer pressure and beheads the statue of the town's founder. Who knows where Bart will strike next?

With the exception of *America's Funniest Home Videos*, *The Simpsons* is the most successful new series of the 1989-90 television season, and almost always ranks in the top twenty—no mean feat for the Fox network, which doesn't even have the affiliate count or coverage of the big three. But perhaps the generation weaned on the pioneering adventures of the *Flintstones* and the *Jetsons* is now sophisticated enough to enjoy something a little more acerbic and adult—yet which reminds them of a little bit of their childhoods.

Animated TV Specials: the Complete Directory to the First Twenty-Five Years, 1962-1987

By George W. Woolery; Scarecrow Press; \$59.90

Reviewed by Bob Miller

What a wonderful reference book! At last we have a record of nearly every TV animated special that aired up until 1987, including those from Disney, the *Peanuts* series, Bugs Bunny specials, and even obscure fare such as *Carleton*, *Your Doorman*; *Flash Gordon: the Greatest Adventure of Them All*; and *The Great Heap*. In all, the book lists 434 programs.

You may be familiar with George Woolery's earlier works, *Children's TV: the First Thirty-Five Years, 1946-1981*, parts I and II (Scarecrow, 1983), in which he details nearly everything you'd want to know about television cartoons and live-action children's series. Woolery is just as comprehensive with *Animated TV Specials*, citing broadcast dates (including reruns!), production credits, voices, songs, awards, distributors, recordings, and home video cassette releases. With his latest book Woolery includes 103 cel reproductions and other illustrations.

Woolery also discusses the history of the animated TV special in considerable detail. In addition, he includes appendices listing the most frequently aired and longest-running network specials, specials using stop-motion animated puppets, specials listed by holiday and topic, and series of specials (with air dates)—plus extensive indices and cross references. It's enough to boggle the mind.

Although the subtitle calls it "The Complete Directory," Woolery, alas, failed to include *Codename: Robotech* (1985) and the *G.I. Joe* TV movies (1985, 1986). But that's a minor nitpick.

Don't be discouraged by the price, either. Yes, \$59.90 is a lot to spend, but it's more economical than having to research the information for yourself. Why take frequent trips to the library, wasting money on gas, time, and parking fees, when you can have the book handy at your home?

Woolery has undertaken a major effort to chronicle children's television, and the result is a wealth of information available nowhere else. *Animated TV Specials* is a must-have for every fan of animation.

Enchanted Drawings: the History of Animation

By Charles Solomon; Alfred A. Knopf; \$75.00

Reviewed by Harry McCracken

Model-sheet drawings of the dogcatcher from Tex Avery's *Three Little Pups* (1953). From *Enchanted Drawings*. Copyright © Turner Entertainment Company.



As I first looked through Charles Solomon's *Enchanted Drawings*, the word that popped into my mind to describe it was "imposing." Not just in physical bulk — it is one of the largest books ever on its subject — but in details down to the stately typeface used and ambitious-sounding chapter titles like "Wabbit Twacks in the Sands of Time, 1946-1950." Even the subtitle — *The History of Animation* — suggests that this is the definitive work on the subject. (It's above the title, in larger type; from the cover, it seems to be the book's title.) Most importantly, and pleasingly, the many illustrations are splendid in both reproduction quality and historical interest. The cels, pencil drawings, and photographs in the "Animation Goes to War, 1941-1945" chapter, almost every one of which is remarkable and previously-unpublished, are nearly enough to justify the book's price.

If only Solomon's text lived up to the aura the rest of the book creates. The basic facts are there, but the book's overwhelming flaw is how little it has to say that will be new to readers who are at all well-versed in animation history. The author has apparently relied as much on other books on the subject as on first-hand research or his own interviews. There are few significant facts to be found in the book that aren't in Leonard Maltin's *Of Mice and Magic*, the only other vaguely all-encompassing work on the history of American animation.

Slugging through much of the book, one

may be moved to wonder if there is only so much that can be written about Mighty Mouse, or the Walter Lantz cartoons of the 1950s, or even far more interesting subjects, like Tex Avery's work. Or even, perish the thought, Disney and Warner's themselves. (We're fortunate that the body of animation literature has grown to the point where material on these topics isn't fascinating for its very existence.) While a fresh outlook can make the most over-discussed subject worthwhile, Solomon recapitulates basic facts and echoes the accepted wisdom on most of the areas he examines. Part of the problem is his prose style, which is rather austere and soberly: there are few writers who can tackle a subject as prosaic as, say, the Famous Studios cartoons — or much of the animation of the past thirty years — and still write engagingly and thoughtfully. Maltin is such a writer; Solomon isn't.

Solomon is at his best when his interest level is high, as it is in the Disney chapters. The section on the studio's 1950s features is particularly worthwhile for its criticism of Disney's work in the period. The chapters on "Animation Goes to War, 1941-1945" and "UPA and the Graphic Revolution, 1943-1959," unlike most of the book, contain much little-known information and suggest a fresher, more informative work that could have been.

The book is also marred by a surprising number of factual errors scattered through-

out, especially misidentified illustrations and misspellings — Arthur Q. Bryant instead of Bryan, Speedy Gonzalez for Gonzales, among many others. An entire studio, Van Beuren, has its name apparently consistently misspelled throughout the fairly lengthy section devoted to it.

If editing *Animato* has taught me anything, it's that errors can and do escape the attention of knowledgeable writers and editors, even when they know perfectly well the facts of a matter. I don't really think that the book's dating of a photograph of Bob Clampett in which a sketch of the fully-realized Bugs Bunny is plainly visible as "mid-1930s" means that Solomon doesn't know that Bugs wasn't even created until several years later. It's possible that that's a typographical error for "mid-1940s," or that somebody other than Solomon wrote the caption. I can't imagine, though, how a reference to Superman's creators as "Jerry Siegal and Joel Schuster" — three misspellings in five words — could have slipped by, especially when the page it's on includes a reproduction of a poster with the correct names.

There are really two primary reasons to buy an expensive, exhaustive art book of this type: to browse through a large selection of well-chosen illustrations, or to learn a lot about the subject in question. Those who come to *Enchanted Drawings* with the former expectation will be delighted. Those with the latter in mind would be better served by investing one-fifth of its purchase price in *Of Mice and Magic*, still the best, most reliable history of the medium available.

Culthood, Volumes One and Two Snappy Video; \$19.95 per volume Reviewed by Harry McCracken

The world of animation enthusiasts can be divided up into two groups, I suspect: those who will love these tapes, and those who can't imagine why anyone would even be interested in them. If you've felt uneducated because you've never seen a Toby the Pup cartoon, or long to have examples of Ted Eshbaugh's work in your collection, these videotapes are a real find. (They aren't new, bearing 1988 copyright dates, but are still available and deserve wider attention than they've received.)

Volume One has the rarer selection of films, by a slight margin. Four of the selections are the work of Ted Eshbaugh, a man whose studio produced films over at least an eleven-year period, but who remains one of the more obscure figures in animation history. (The few passing references in

Of *Mice and Magic* are almost the only material on Eshbaugh that I am aware of). The Eshbaugh cartoons on the tape are uniform in both their technical competence and their strangeness, and amount to a mini-survey of American animation trends in the 1930s and 1940s: an attempt at creating a Mickey Mouse-like character (*Goofy Goat Antics*, 1931); a Silly-Symphony imitation (*The Snowman*, 1933); an adaptation from another medium (*The Wizard of Oz*, 1933); and a particularly weird propaganda cartoon (*Cap'n Cub* (1942), which is about an adorable little bear cub who leads a fighter mission against Japanese monkeys).

Other cartoons on the tape include a Toby the Pup cartoon (*Toby in the Museum*, 1931), one of a series that was thought to have no surviving entries (Toby turns out to be similar to one early version of Fleischer's Bimbo); Ub Iwerks's version of *Little Black Sambo* (1935); *Spring Song* (1933), another pseudo-Silly Symphony from a forgotten studio; and the relatively well-known Fleischer cartoon *Let's Sing Along With Popeye* (1933).

As Volume One concentrates to some degree on Ted Eshbaugh's work, Volume

Two emphasizes commercial films. *Winky the Watchman* (1946) is a Hugh Harman commercial film made to promote dentistry that is actually available elsewhere: it's a memorable cartoon that's also notable as an example of Harman's later work. (Winky is a tooth-guarding elf who's a cross between Dopey and Fleischer's Gabby in looks and personality.) In a vaguely similar vein, but much less well-known, is Ub Iwerks's *The Microbe Army* (1935), produced for the Boots chemical company.

Beauty Shoppe (1939) is a Gran'pop cartoon, part of a short-lived series about an elderly monkey that is almost as forgotten as the Toby one. *Three Blind Mice* (1945), an Ottawa Film Board production about industrial safety in a rather modern-looking cutout technique, is one of the few films on these tapes that doesn't seem like a relic from a very musty past. *Duck and Cover* (1955) is a very dated film for schoolchildren about avoiding the ill effects of a nuclear blast by hiding under one's desk; it's actually primarily in live action. *PM Picnic* (1948) is a — the word is unavoidable when discussing these cartoons — strange salesman's film in which woodland creatures eagerly look forward to a night

spent drinking PM Blended Whiskey. *Sweet Adeline* (1926) is a comparatively-normal Fleischer bouncing-ball cartoon.

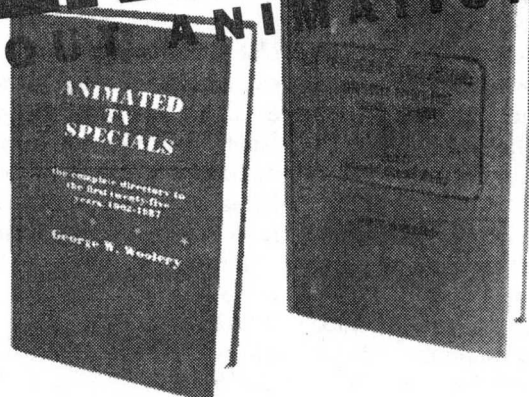
The tape also includes what is probably the oddest, most obscure film on either volume. *Monkey Doodle* (circa 1932) features some quite sophisticated animation, but a sense of story and gags that is so absolutely unique that it's pretty hard to even explain what's going on at any given time. I've already seen more than one knowledgeable animation fan left speechless and slightly befuddled by this story of a monkey and dog involved in questionable activities in the jungle.

If nothing else, these tapes indicate just how much animation history remains unexplored: most of the cartoons on them aren't even mentioned in any books on the subject. While home video's power to let us own copies of beloved films like *Pinocchio* is wonderful, its ability to rescue eccentric stuff like this that everybody had forgotten about is just as valuable.

Cultoons Volumes One and Two are available from Snappy Video (PO Box 3206, Ann Arbor, MI 48106), from Bosko Video (3802 E. Cudahy, Cudahy, WI 53110), and through The Whole Toon Catalog.

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ABOUT ANIMATION



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A Little Birdie Told Me

A Gossip Column by Thelma Scumm

Hello, drearies! I'm back again to bring you the latest in Toontown gossip. I say! It's been so long since I've appeared in these pages, and I have so much to say that I don't know where to begin.

The huge success of *The Little Mermaid* over the lush *All Dogs Go to Heaven* proves once again that substance will always triumph over style. The extremely rapid release of *Mermaid* onto video will help to further push the characters into the public consciousness. But hey, using Ariel to push McDonald's is a bit too much (sort of like when McDonald's put Jewish Fievel on Christmas stockings). After all, is Ariel going to swim into McD's and order a Filet-O-Fish?

Mermaid is truly a magical film, and to prove that statement, here's a quick list of some of the magic that animation buff William Simpson (no relation) discovered in the film: Ursula's lipstick disappears the moment before she applies it; the thimble that Sebastian gets caught in disappears and reappears; Sebastian himself disappears in a shot with King Triton near the end; and lemon slices disappear from Grimsby's dinner plate.

By the time you read this, the second Roger Rabbit short (*Roller Coaster Rabbit*) will have been released, attached to the big budget *Dick Tracy*. Seems to me that *The Great Piggy Bank Robbery* would have been more appropriate, but hey, it ain't Disney... (And does this mean they'll include one of those awful 1960s *Dick Tracy* cartoons with *Roger Rabbit II*, whenever it comes out?)

Speaking of Roger, did you notice that *Tummy Trouble* wasn't even nominated for an Oscar as best animated short? It was without a doubt the most widely-seen animated short in years, but yet the Academy

in its finite wisdom decided to snub it. "For years, artists in the industry have complained about the death of the studio short cartoon," said one of the creators of *Tummy Trouble* (who asked to remain anonymous). "Here's the first cartoon short from Disney in 25 years and it's ignored. What kind of message does that send?"

By the way, has anyone noticed that Disney's recent success in the Roger Rabbit shorts is because these shorts are basically reshapes of (or "tributes" to, if you're feeling nice) old Warner Brothers and MGM cartoons? Disney will try to move away from this when it releases *The Prince and The Pauper* starring Mickey and the gang.

In case you haven't heard (and if you haven't, you haven't been reading this magazine), Disney is making a sequel to *The Rescuers* with the cast traveling to Australia for some ridiculous reason. Along with the new *TaleSpin* with Baloo from *Jungle Book*, this seems to signal a new trend in Disney animation. Be sure to look out for more sequels: *Three Caballeros Go to Panama*, *One Hundred and Two Dalmations*, *The Sword Out of the Stone*, and *Cinderella II: The Wrath of Mom*.

On to other news: the new Universal Studios Tour theme park, just opening within shouting range of Walt's place in Orlando, features a ride that takes visitors through the many worlds of Hanna-Barbera animation, including *The Flintstones*, *The Jetsons*, *Scooby Doo*, and others. This is accomplished through animated footage that's a combination of expensive hand-drawn, Roger Rabbit-like cartoons and computer animation. The attraction is said to be the best ever done of these characters, and an impressive tribute to Hanna-Barbera, except...the animation it contains was done by Sullivan-Bluth! Why this is the case is understandably not something that the folks

at Universal are eager to talk about, but maybe three decades of the SatAM grind have been hard on Bill and Joe's ability to do high-gloss work. (Another clue as to whether or not they've still got the touch may be their new theatrical *Jetsons* feature.)

Animation fans are quite excited over the success of *The Simpsons*, but Concerned Parents everywhere are in an uproar. (Whenever you see the words "Concerned Parents" simply replace them with the word "Censors.") Matt Groening responds to narrow minded criticism over the series by screaming "It's satire, people!!!"

And don't you just love the things little Bart is writing on the blackboard at the start of each episode? My favorites are "I will not instigate revolution," "I did not see Elvis," and "I will not waste chalk."

They will be missed: Disney animators Hal Ambro and Daniel MacManus, and of course, Jim Henson. If Henson's position as an honorary member of the animation family wasn't already solid, it was certainly made official by his sale of his company to Disney just a few months before one of the most untimely deaths I can think of.

Time out to answer my fan mail! Animation art dealer Pam Martin (of Cel-ebration! fame) writes to ask what it takes to get mentioned in my column. Well, Pam, it is hard to get ink from an animation gossip columnist. Being seen in the company of Bugs Bunny might do it. Or you might try writing a tell-all biography of, say, Pluto... And while sighting Elvis in your local pizza parlor won't get you any attention here, spotting Winsor McCay there *will*!

That's all the room I have for this issue, folks. Keep those cards and letters coming (those of you in the animation industry: I do not reveal my sources!) and remember: turn out that light!

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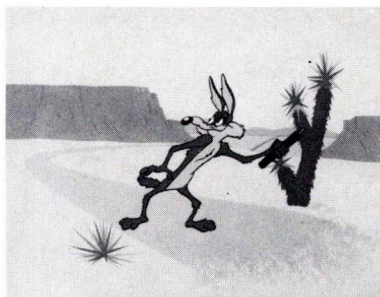
"The Pointer" (1939)
Beautiful cel of Mickey on original Disney
watercolor production background from
"Officer Duck" (1939). 8 x 10 1/4. \$12,500.



Multi Cel Set Up of
Tom & Jerry on background
layout from "Life with Tom"
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Fred, Barney & Betty in
Fred's car. Cel on Flintstones
production background.
8 1/2 x 9 3/4. \$550



"Stop Look & Hasten" (1954)
Hand inked cel of Wile E. Coyote
throwing a stick of dynamite.
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